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Haredim attack non-Orthodox at Western Wall

By HAIM SHAPIRO

A crowd of haredim yesterday attacked a group of non-Orthodox worshippers trying to hold a Shavuot service near the Western Wall.

The group of about 100 worshippers included members of local Conservative and Reform congregations and members of various study programs, comprising mostly young people, but also families with small children.

Ma'ayan Turner, a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College, said that the group had gathered toward the back of

the Western Wall Plaza in the early hours of the morning, after many of them had attended all-night study sessions. She said that a similar service last year had attracted angry shouts and threats from haredim at the Wall, but that last year the police had ringed the non-Orthodox group and protected them until they completed their service.

Turner said that what particularly upset her was the continued spitting at the worshippers and the frequent cries of "Nazis," an epithet which she had not heard last year.

There were, she stressed, a few in the

crowd who tried to defend them, including a woman who admonished those around her that the worshippers were Jews, and a man who took out his own handkerchief to wipe the spittle off someone's neck.

During the reading of the Book of Ruth, the police told the group they could not protect them if the women continued to wear tallitot. Most of the women wearing prayer shawls then removed them, Turner said.

However, as the surrounding crowd continued to grow during the Torah reading, which was carried out with a small

scroll that the worshippers held in their hands, the police again intervened and said that they could not continue to protect the group in the plaza, and offered to accompany them to a safer spot.

The non-Orthodox group then tried to pray just outside the entry to the Western Wall Plaza, but the police again moved them to an archeological park above the plaza.

Reuven Lerner, a member of the Masorti (Conservative) movement, recounted that as he and others were leaving the area of the Wall, his tallit was pulled off a few times. A fellow wor-

shiper had his tallit stomped on, he said. He also said that by the time the group reached the archeological park there were brown stains on some of their shirts and tallitot.

"I believe they were from coffee grounds," he said. Police, however, said that bags of excrement were thrown at the non-Orthodox as they were leaving the plaza.

Rabbi Andrew Sachs, a Conservative rabbi, filed a criminal complaint against the head of Yeshivat Porat Yosef, saying students had thrown garbage at the group from their windows.

Rabbi Pinchas Spectre, director of the Masorti movement in Israel, said that such incidents sullied the name of Judaism.

"It is tragic to have a situation such as this, for people in the name of Judaism to stop others from studying and praying," Spectre said.

Spectre also said that the leaders of the movement would respond firmly to anyone who aided and abetted this violence.

"We won't sit quietly while violence progresses," he said.

See HAREDIM, Page 9



Fruitful festival
Members of Kibbutz Ramat Rahel take part in a parade of the first fruits for the Shavuot festival yesterday. The kibbutz, established on JNF land 71 years ago, is located on the southern approaches to Jerusalem. (Joe Malcolm)

PA: Congress J'lem policy will hurt peace

By JAY BUSHINSKY and news agencies

A US Congress resolution recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital was praised by Israel and criticized by Palestinians yesterday.

The House of Representatives voted 406-17 on Tuesday to recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel - a position opposed by the Clinton administration as a hindrance to Middle East peace efforts.

The House also voted to provide \$100 million for moving the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Describing the legislative move as "obviously reflecting the will of the American people," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's director of communications David Bar-Illan said, "We are delighted that the Congress has recognized Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel and that it will remain so forever."

He also expressed happiness at the prospective transfer of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem "in 1999."

Palestinians, who claim east Jerusalem as a future capital, were highly critical of the legislation.

A resolution of obvious support for Israel... puts a big nail in the coffin of the peace process and the credibility of the United States as a peace broker," PA Higher Education Minister Hanan Ashrawi said yesterday.

Most countries in the world, including the US, have not recognized Israel's annexation of east Jerusalem immediately after the Six Day War. It has been the position of successive US governments that the city must never be divided again, but that its future must be settled through negotiations.

PM, Arafat meet el-Baz today

By JAY BUSHINSKY and news agencies

The timing and venue of the next Israeli-Palestinian talks on renewing full-fledged negotiations depends on the outcome of today's separate meetings between Egyptian envoy Osama el-Baz, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

El-Baz is scheduled to meet with Netanyahu at 1:30 in the prime minister's Tel Aviv office, after which he is due to proceed to Gaza for a session with Arafat.

His consecutive meetings, the hours likely to transpire and the need to convey explicit instructions to the respective teams may preclude resumption of the two teams' discussions today, as originally intended.

Netanyahu yesterday conferred twice by telephone with President Hosni Mubarak and spoke with Jordan's King Hussein as well.

Jerusalem is determined to continue the talks, "despite the Palestinians' unsatisfactory position on the need to suppress terrorism and enhance security," a senior government official said.

But there also was concern about the "preconditions" posed by the Palestinians, particularly their demand that there be a freeze in construction work at Har Homa and a "pause" in settlement activity.

"If they don't come down from that treep, the talks won't continue," a highly-placed source said. There is no chance the government would give in to a Palestinian demand that work at Har Homa be stopped for an initial two weeks, the source said. "It won't be suspended for even two hours."

He deemed it unlikely that substantive decisions on these matters

could be taken at the current level of representation - Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh and chief negotiator Saeb Erekat on the Israeli and Palestinian sides, respectively.

The ultimate decision would have to be made by Arafat, a fact that makes El-Baz's meeting with him potentially decisive.

Arafat adviser Nabil Abu Rudeineh said there has been no progress since talks resumed in lateral fashion in Cairo last week, but "the good thing is that the Egyptians are involved. This is important for regional self-respect."

The key Palestinian demand remains a settlement freeze for the duration of final-status talks, which Netanyahu wants to see completed in six months. Abu Rudeineh said.

Meanwhile, the EU envoy, Miguel Moratinos, denied on Tuesday he had set a deadline for Egyptian efforts to solve the peace-making crisis between Israel and the Palestinians. He issued the denial after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Monday slammed his reported comments.

"I'm fully sorry that my declaration was misunderstood," Moratinos told Reuters. "The European Union has never put a deadline to the excellent efforts of Egyptian diplomacy.... What I said was if in a certain time there is no way out, we are willing to evaluate with Egypt and take more decisions."

Israeli Radio on Sunday quoted Moratinos as saying if Egypt's efforts failed within the two weeks then the United States, in conjunction with the EU, would engage in "comprehensive crisis intervention."

Jon Immanuel contributed to this report.



Osama el-Baz (David Rubinger)

Gingrich slams killings of land dealers

By JON IMMANUEL and news agencies

The Palestinian Authority has rejected statements by US House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich linking continued aid to the PA with an end to the murder of land dealers, for which he held the PA directly responsible.

Israel, meanwhile, applauded the decision. "We welcome the recognition of what is happening here by the Congress of the US," said David Bar-Illan, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's communications director.

The US State Department said yesterday that Palestinian officials who called for the killing of Arabs who sold land to Jews should be "repudiated or fired."

But spokesman Nicholas Burns rebuffed calls by Gingrich for the possible suspension of aid to the

Palestinians because of recent murders of Arabs suspected of making such sales.

Meanwhile, Palestinian police arrested the head of their military intelligence in Ramallah on suspicion of misuse of authority, Palestinian officials said yesterday.

They said Hussein Alyan was arrested on Tuesday on orders from PA Chairman Yasser Arafat. "Alyan was detained yesterday for interrogation," said Brig.-Gen. Moussa Arafat, who heads military intelligence in the West Bank and Gaza, adding that he was still in detention.

Alyan, the Ramallah officer identified by Israel as the man responsible for kidnapping land dealers, was apparently taken to Jericho from Ramallah to be questioned about corruption or the killings. It was not clear whether

he was to be tried.

In an emotional floor speech, Gingrich said: "The Palestinians must be on notice that these senseless actions must stop. The vigilante 'murder of realtors by Palestinian security officials is an egregious violation of human rights and of international norms.'"

Gingrich called the killings, by bludgeoning and a shot in the head, "Nazi-like." Gingrich was speaking on a "Sense of Congress" amendment, which expresses the House's opinion but does not make law.

The amendment, to a bill funding State Department operations, was passed on a voice vote. The United States has pledged \$500 million in aid to the Palestinians over five years, of which \$220 million has already been distributed.

Burns said senior Palestinian

justice officials, whom he did not identify, "have publicly called for political assassinations. And that's wrong and those people ought to be repudiated or fired."

Speaking at a regular news briefing, he declined to say if he was referring to Palestinian Justice Minister Fathi Abu Medein, who was quoted on May 4 as saying that Palestinians who sold land to Jews faced execution.

Burns said Gingrich was right to call attention to the problem but that the administration differed from the speaker "in one respect, and that is, we think that American aid should continue to the Palestinians."

"American aid is directed towards the Palestinian people. It does not go to the Palestinian Authority," he said.

See GINGRICH, Page 9

Defense rests in McVeigh sentencing

The parents of convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh pleaded for his life yesterday, delivering the last, emotional testimony before the defense rested its case in the sentencing phase of his trial.

"He is not the monster he has been portrayed as," his mother said. The former soldier was convicted on June 2 of the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal office building.

Story, Page 3.

Smoothing things over - preparing the peacekeepers

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

United Nations and military liaison officers defused escalating tensions along the borders of Firinam, Tonari and Casadosia last week and helped solve a water-shortage problem threatening to spark a war between the three nations. But don't feel bad if you didn't know about it or if you've never even heard of these nations. All the tensions took place in a simulation game run by the IDF for foreign officers in a base north of Tel Aviv. Twenty officers from 12 nations, including Israel, have spent the past two weeks in an incredibly intensive, first-of-its-kind course learning

the fundamentals of liaising between armies.

The world's future military challenges are not likely to be world wars but regional conflicts where peacekeeping forces will interact to solve crises. But, until recently, there did not exist anywhere in the world a doctrine, either written or verbal, on how armies should liaise with each other.

The IDF, which has the unique experience of having not only five foreign armies on its borders, but also five international peacekeeping forces scattered along its frontiers, stepped in and claimed title to one of the newest military doctrines.

Senior officers in the IDF Liaison

Unit for Foreign Forces wrote the text book on liaising between military forces and has put together this unique course to train officers from around the world to be professional liaison officers. "We have the most history and experience in liaising," said Lt.-Col. Avi Mishali, deputy commander of the unit and head of the course. "We asked ourselves how can we contribute to the world? Look, we don't send soldiers to peacekeeping missions, but we found that we could contribute to all these peacekeeping missions in the area of liaisons. It also deals with peace and the spearhead of peace today belongs to the military."

See TOUCHING BASE, Page 7

Hebrew Book Week opens tonight

Survey: Women read more than men

Thirty-eight percent of Israelis read at least one book a month, with 5.4 percent reading four or more books a month, according to a survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The bureau released the figures to mark tonight's opening of Hebrew Book Week.

The survey also showed that more women read books regularly than men. Almost 43% of women are regular readers, compared to 34% of men.

Another survey, by the Gallup organization, revealed that 22.3% of the population read books in the bathroom.

More Jerusalemites read in the bathroom than do people in the rest of the country. Almost 32% of people in the capital read in the smallest room.

The Gallup survey also showed that while 75% of parents here believe that their children read less than they themselves did as children, 26.7% of haredi parents said that they believe their children read more than they did.

A third of respondents told the Gallup pollsters that they would visit their cities' Hebrew Book Week fairs with more women than men planning to attend. (Iim)

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NEWS

in brief

2 killed on roads

Two people were killed and 12 people were injured in road accidents Tuesday.

Guy Ben-David, 21, of Kiryat Gat, was killed near Mashabei Sadeh, south of Beersheba, when a large truck traveling in front of him suddenly turned left and he crashed into it. Police suspended the truck driver's license for 90 days.

Moshe Tawil, 62, of Herzliya was killed when he tried to cross the street and he was hit by a motorcycle. The motorcyclist suffered moderate injuries.

In Jerusalem, five people were lightly injured when their car collided with an Egged bus. A 75-year-old pedestrian was hit by a car when he tried to cross the street near Damascus Gate. A car crashed into an Eilat bus stop at high speed Tuesday night, destroying the bus shelter. No one was waiting at the stop at the time. The car's five passengers were lightly injured. *Itim*

Gaza memorial sparks tension

A memorial erected on Tuesday to an IDF soldier killed in clashes with Palestinian Police in September has enraged Palestinians, a Palestinian police officer and witnesses said.

They said the 1.5 meter high, stone memorial was erected on privately owned Palestinian land in the southern part of the Gaza Strip, which is under the Palestinian Authority's jurisdiction.

"This is a clear provocation.... We demand that the Israeli side remove it immediately," said Maj.-Gen. Abdel Razzak Majaydeh, head of Palestinian Police in Gaza.

The IDF Spokesman said it was checking the report. *Reuter*

Egypt investigating fire on Israelis' coach

Egyptian investigators have asked forensic experts to find out why a coach carrying Israeli tourists caught fire in Cairo earlier this week, security sources said yesterday.

No one was hurt in the incident, which took place on Monday night in central Cairo. Government newspapers said the driver had got out of the coach to find out why a fire exploded and then noticed a spark in the engine, which set the coach ablaze. *Reuter*

King Hussein asks Mordechai to visit

King Hussein telephoned Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai on Tuesday and proposed the two hold a meeting in the near future "to exchange ideas and opinions on the regional situation and the peace process."

The conversation between the two occurred when Hussein called Mordechai to thank him for hosting his daughter Princess Aisha in Israel last week. Hussein particularly was grateful to Mordechai and the IDF for showing Aisha the Women's Corps since the princess is in the process of setting up a similar unit in the Royal Jordanian Armed Forces. *Arieh O'Sullivan*



King Hussein (Scout 80)

SLA soldier lightly wounded

A South Lebanese Army soldier was lightly wounded early yesterday when mortars were fired at several SLA posts in the security zone's western sector. He was taken to the hospital for treatment and has since been released.

Terrorists attacked SLA and IDF posts in the zone several times yesterday, but did not cause any injuries or damage.

On Tuesday, two SLA posts in the zone's eastern sector came under mortar fire. No injuries or damage resulted and IDF troops returned fire. Hizbullah claimed responsibility for the incident. *Itim*

Israeli Arab delegation to visit Syria

A group of Israeli Arab leaders is to visit Damascus shortly, according to a report in the Al-Ithad newspaper. David Bar-Ilan, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's communications director, said the government has no objection to the visit, if it might contribute to the resumption of peace talks between Israel and Syria. *Itim*

State hospitals to cut services Monday

By JUDY SIEGEL

Activities in the 25 state general, geriatric and psychiatric hospitals will be severely curtailed starting Monday, as hospital directors said they cannot function properly as a result of the Treasury's 20% freeze in their budgets.

In addition, maintenance and administrative personnel at state general hospitals will hold a 24-hour warning strike starting this morning.

Directors of the government hospitals, who met before the holiday, said the freeze—representing NIS 197 million until the end of the year—makes it impossible for the institutions to offer their regular services. The Treasury issued the freeze orders because Health Minister Yehoshua Matza declined over a month ago to sign an order increasing the per-diem hospitalization rate, which the health funds must pay for treatment of their members; Matza argued that such a hike would cause the health funds to collapse, because they have not received an increase in health taxes or government subsidies.

Prof. Ya'acov Hart, head of the Association of Government Hospital Directors, and Dr. Elisha Bartov, chairman of the Government Hospital Doctors Union, said that starting Monday, there will be no non-emergency operations. In addition, all outpatient clinics and the pediatric, gastroenterology and cardiology clinics and institutes would be shut

down. Efforts would be made, they said, not to harm the functioning of emergency rooms, obstetrical wards, neonatal and dialysis units and urgent treatment of cancer patients.

They called on the public to avoid going to government hospitals except in emergencies because of the problems facing the state health system.

Meanwhile, the union of maintenance and administrative workers will follow a reduced Shabbat schedule at Sieff, Nahariya, Rambam, Bnei Zion, Hillel Yaffe, Sheba, Wolfson, Assaf Harofeh, Barzilai and Poriya hospitals. Union head Batya Levy blamed Matza and Health Ministry director-general Prof. Gabi Barabash for "completely ignoring" their promises to solve the shortage of 1,500 workers in the state hospitals. This shortage, she said, prevents staff from providing patients with proper care.

Health Ministry deputy director-general Yair Amikam said that a meeting between Treasury and Health Ministry officials resulted in an agreement that "some" of Matza's demands about funding are justified. The joint teams are due to report back to the prime minister by the end of the month.

However, Treasury officials continue to insist that costs can be cut by NIS 600 million if efficiency measures are carried out, while the Health Ministry says these can result in only a NIS 200 million reduction at most; the health system is suffering a NIS 1.5 billion deficit.

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beloved husband, our father, grandfather and brother,
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Arafat-Iraq overtures condemned

By JAY BUSHINSKY

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's ongoing effort to tighten his personal links to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was deplored yesterday by senior government officials as "not boding well for the Middle East peace process."

Arafat's moves are in step with Syria and Iran, which are seeking a pan-Arab coalition against Turkey because of its military incursion into northern Iraq and believe the Baghdad regime is a natural partner.

The Palestinian leader is believed to have sent a letter to Hussein expressing regret at

his not having managed to visit him since the end of the Gulf War six years ago.

The arduous overland trip across the desert from Amman to the Iraqi capital was given as the only reason for his having stayed away. At the same time, Arafat conveyed his best wishes for the speedy recovery of Hussein's son, Uday, who was gravely wounded in an assassination attempt.

Disclosure of the letter by Jordanian news media on Tuesday coincided with a report in the daily *Ha'aretz* that Arafat conferred secretly in Amman with Iraq's ambassador to Jordan, Nuri Bis. Israel was said to have found out about the rendezvous and to have

notified the US.

The officials recalled Arafat's dispatch of a telegram to Hussein congratulating him on his last birthday and expressing interest in closer relations between Iraq and the PA.

"This says something about the nature of the PA and it is not good," the sources said.

The Arafat-Bis meeting and the other cordial gestures to Hussein are unlikely to please US policymakers who believe the Iraqi regime should be shunned politically and subjected to economic sanctions.

Israeli observers have detected a recent shift in Iraq's attitude toward the Middle East peace process.

Until the Turks began their operation against the Kurdish PKK separatists last month, Baghdad contended that it was up to the Palestinians to decide whether they wanted to opt for peace. But since then, the ruling Baath Arab Socialist party's ideology has prevailed, eliciting traditional Iraqi hostility toward Israel.

Independent Palestinian analysts believe Jordan is not interested in joining Syria and Iran in courting Iraq. They contend that unlike Syria and Iraq, King Hussein has no objections to Turkey's military agreements with Israel and does not sympathize with the PKK.

Panel to review permits for Israelis operating in areas

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

The Defense Ministry has set up a special committee to reexamine the process of granting licenses, franchises and permits for Israeli bodies allowed to operate in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.

Heading the committee will be Maj.-Gen. (res.) Rafael Vardi, an adviser to Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, and ministry ombudsman Maj.-Gen. (res.) Moshe Gidon.

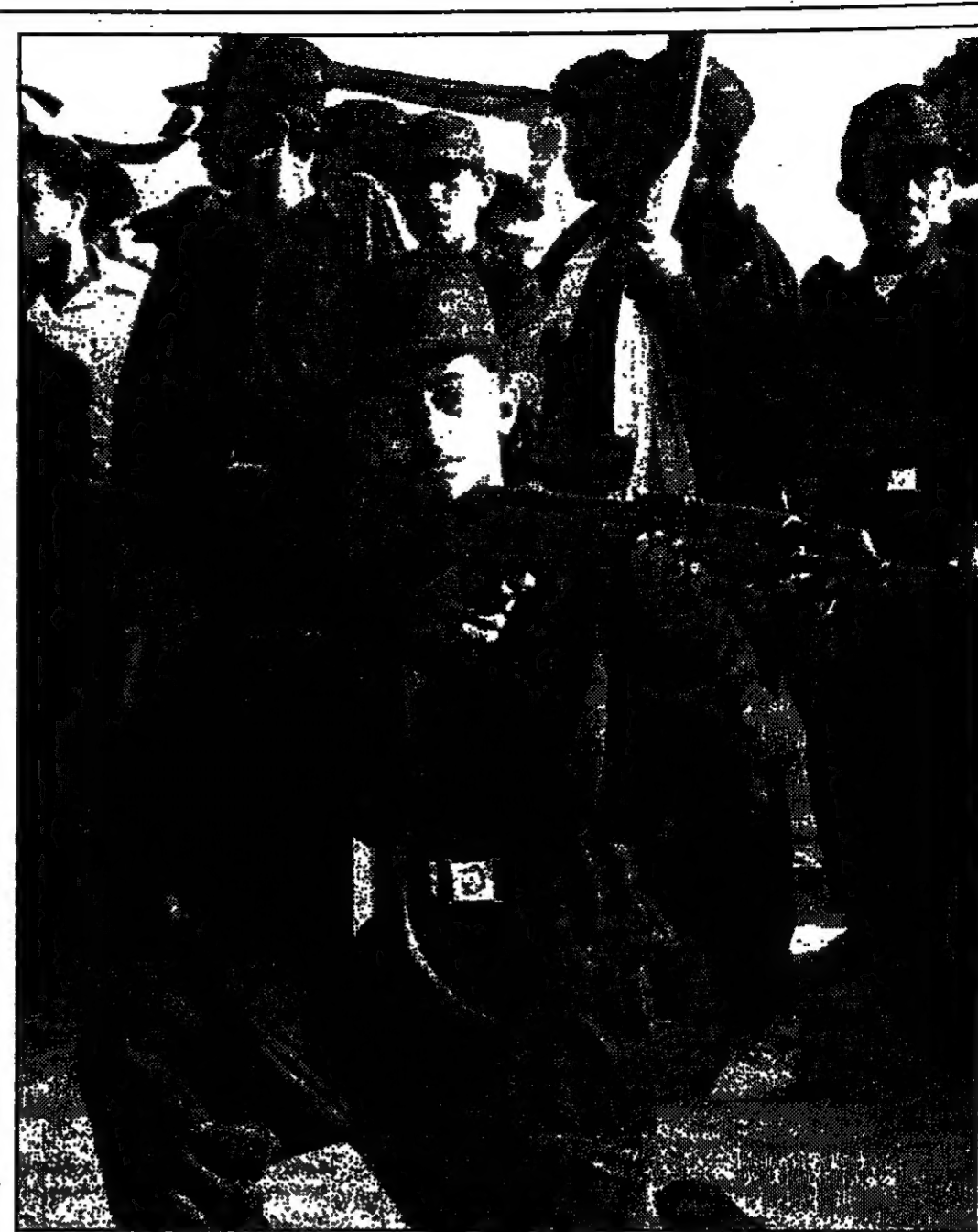
The committee has four months to come up with proper guidelines for the criteria, practices and procedure for obtaining franchises and other permits in the territories, as well as methods of inspecting the process, Defense Ministry officials said.

Meanwhile, Palestinian businessmen and Israeli officials decided in a meeting held earlier this week to set up a new industrial park at the Karni Crossing in the Gaza Strip. Two committees were formed to deal with the project, one to examine the movement of goods and security and the other to seek entrepreneurs.

The Palestinians said that they plan to start operating the first factory there by October.

Li Avi Gambash, spokesman for the IDF district coordinating office in the Gaza Strip, said the project was being supported by the World Bank, the US, Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

In addition to this, the number of merchants being allowed into Israel was raised by 500 yesterday, bringing to 8,000 the total allowed in.



Palestinians protest land confiscations

A Palestinian youth aims a Kalashnikov during a training exercise at a protest against confiscation of land from Palestinians at the settlement of Morag, near Rafiah yesterday. (AP)

Jordan reportedly in rift with PA
Kingdom said angry over Palestinian diaspora portfolio

By DOUGLAS DAVIS

LONDON — Significant political realignments are under way on Israel's periphery this week, according to reports in London-based Arabic-language media.

According to one report in the daily *al-Quds al-Arabi* on Tuesday, Jordan's King Hussein is seeking to ease the tensions in his relationship with Syria and is pursuing a "historic reconciliation" with Damascus.

At the same time, the Saudi-owned daily *Asharq al-Awsat* reported Tuesday that a new chieftain has set in between Jordan and Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat, who held talks with Hussein in Amman on Monday.

Jordanian officials are said to be angry over Arafat's decision to appoint Assad Abderrahman to a new portfolio dealing with Palestinian diaspora and refugee affairs in the PA cabinet.

The paper says Amman interprets the appointment by Arafat as interference in Jordan's internal affairs by implying authority over Jordanians of Palestinian origin, who are estimated to constitute some 60 percent of Jordan's total population. According to *Asharq al-Awsat*, Amman fears that their move is a signal to Jordan's Palestinians that their loyalty lies with a future Palestinian entity rather than with Jordan, thereby encouraging "ethnic consciousness" among Palestinians in Jordan.

The paper also noted that most Palestinian officials accompanying Arafat to Amman refused to comment on the issue, but Fatah Central Committee member Mohammad Ghannim suggested that the Jordanians were overreacting.

Ghannim noted that the PLO had always maintained a department dealing with diaspora and

refugee affairs — the "Returnees' Department" — and that the newly established ministry was therefore not new, but merely reflected a change of name. He also said that Palestinian refugees lived not only in Jordan but also in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the West Bank and Gaza: "It is not a matter that concerns only Jordan," he explained.

Asharq al-Awsat reported that Palestinian circles in Amman are convinced Jordan's anger was not provoked by the establishment of the new ministry, but rather by Egypt's emergence as the key player in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Hussein, they say, won high marks in Washington for helping to break the impasse over the Hebron negotiations and now feels he has been supplanted by Egypt.

Meanwhile, *al-Quds al-Arabi* reported that Hussein's apparent rapprochement with Syria's President Hafez Assad is intended to persuade Damascus to end its support for various Jordanian opposition groups.

One unmistakable sign of his intentions, noted the paper, was a speech he delivered in the northern town of Irbid at the weekend in which he spoke warmly of Assad's regime but criticized its support for Jordanian opposition parties and professional associations which he condemned for maintaining "external links."

Another sign was Hussein's decision to appoint veteran former prime minister Zaid Rifa'i as speaker of the Senate, the unelected upper house of parliament, following the resignation of the Ahmad Lozi.

Rifa'i, a lifelong friend of Hussein, is considered to be close to Syria and his appointment to high office is seen as a reflection of Hussein's wish to improve ties with Damascus.

Women barred from singing at Nahal event

The woman and girls who had been scheduled to sing at the Yotv Forest today will not appear, following a request from rabbis representing pre-army yeshiva programs, Israel Radio announced yesterday.

The ministry's Youth and Nahal branch is sponsoring the day-long event, in memory of two Golan officers killed by terrorists, to increase motivation to serve in the IDF. Over 2,500 youths are expected to participate in the activities, which are to conclude with a parade. A woman soloist and the coed Alfei Menashe youth choir were to have performed at the parade.

When the heads of the pre-army yeshiva program learned of this, they said their yeshivot would boycott the event if the woman and girls sang. The event's organizers decided to remove the performers from the program so that all of the youth would be able to participate in the event, Israel Radio reported.

Religious Kibbutz Movement

secretary Danny Tamari came out strongly against pulling the woman and girls from the performance. The rabbis must "recognize the fact that we live in a society that includes religious and secular" Jews and must work to build unity, he said.

Hanoar Haoved representatives called the decision a continuation of religious coercion and said their organization would not participate in similar events unless the religious organizations accepted that "we live in a diverse and egalitarian society."

Hashomer Hatzair head David Drori said this incident is liable to ruin all of the joint efforts by his youth movement and Bnei Akiva to bridge the religious-secular gaps.

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid condemned the decision and called on the IDF to continue with the scheduled program. Male and female soldiers are equally important to the IDF, he said, and no one should be permitted to insult the female soldiers. *(Itim)*

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The Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Immigration, Minister Natan Sharansky, and the Minister of Immigration Absorption, Yuli Edelstein, have appointed a committee to examine all aspects of the proposed IMMIGRATION ABSORPTION LAW.
All those wishing to apply to the committee should write to Ms. Marina Poluchuk, P.O.B. 13061, Jerusalem.

مكتبة النور



French troops protect French and Congolese nationals near Brazzaville airport yesterday.

Fighting in Congo despite ceasefire order

News agencies

BRAZZAVILLE — President Pascal Lissouba and the leader of a private militia agreed to a ceasefire yesterday to halt the civil war that has devastated the Congolese capital, but fighting continued.

"I'm ordering a cease-fire from this moment," Lissouba said on national radio. His bitter rival, Gen. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, went on his own private radio station to announce that he had agreed to a cease-fire as well.

But French soldiers, journalists and hundreds of civilians seeking shelter had to dive for cover when a burst of automatic rifle fire erupted near their base at the international airport shortly after the announcements.

A 10-year-old boy suffered a slight injury to his hand from a bullet, and the fright reduced some of the estimated 400 civilians — already badly shaken by a week of fierce fighting — to tears.

Sassou-Nguesso's radio continued broadcasting anti-government statements and calling for government soldiers to come over to the militia side.

French armed forces evacuating civilians from the strife-ridden Congolese capital hoped to fly a further 200 out before night fell yesterday, a military spokesman said.

But with exchanges of fire still coming as close as 50 metres from the airport building where they were sheltering, the spokesman said it had been decided to ferry more than 200 others, for whom there was no hope of evacuation yesterday, back to safe sites in the city.

He said the civilians, of various nationalities but including only a few French nationals, most of whom have already been flown to safety, would be transported in buses and cars under heavy armed escort.

"We are not abandoning you,

we are going to get the maximum number of people out of here. Those who have to go into town — it is for your own security," a French officer assured the civilians.

Fighting between forces loyal to the two men broke out Thursday when Lissouba sent in troops to disarm Sassou-Nguesso's private militia, the Cobras. Lissouba had sought to immobilize the militia in the run-up to next month's presidential election, apparently fearing Sassou-Nguesso would use his forces to foment civil unrest and hurt Lissouba's chances of winning re-election.

Heavy fighting with mortars, machine guns and grenades pounded Brazzaville until daylight, when it subsided slightly.

French troops ventured into the city to pick up civilians, including many crowded at the French ambassador's residence, and carried them back to the international airport's private Aeroclub.

Libya says it will hand over Lockerbie suspects

CAIRO (AP) — Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi says he is prepared to hand over two suspects wanted in connection with the 1988 Pan Am bombing over Scotland for trial anywhere in the world except the United States and Britain.

"Apart from these two places, Libya will agree on any place suggested by the international community," Gaddafi said, in a speech monitored yesterday by the BBC. The BBC said he made the speech in the Mediterranean port of Darnah to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the evacuation of US military personnel from Wheelus Air Base near Tripoli, the Libyan capital, on June 11, 1970.

A total of 270 people were killed in the bombing of the Pan Am jet over Lockerbie, Scotland, which led to the 1991 indictment in the US of Libyan intelligence agents Abdel Basset Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimah and UN sanctions on Libya the following year.

The two men, also wanted for trial in Britain, have long been on the FBI's "Most Wanted" list but are believed to be in Libya. The US wants them extradited to face trial there.

"It does not matter whether the two suspects have been charged or not, the important thing is the trial," Gaddafi said, according to the BBC. "This is the request of the families of the victims ... it is also our request. The suspects in the Lockerbie case must be brought to justice." Libya has in the past said the two men cannot be guaranteed a free trial in Britain or the US and, instead, made several offers to resolve the issue. These included handing them over to the World Court in The Hague or to a third country to stand trial.

The United States and Britain have consistently rejected these offers and it was not immediately clear why the Libyan leader is repeating his offer to hand over the two men to a third country.

Earlier this month, relatives of the Lockerbie victims dismissed a letter sent to them by Libyan officials as a "propaganda ploy" to get the UN to lift the sanctions on Libya.

The letter, unsigned and sent from Libya's UN mission in New York, says Libya is "ready to enter serious negotiations ... regarding the procedures leading to a trial" of the two Libyans.

Hague emerges as new Tory favorite

LONDON (AP) — William Hague, the 36-year-old boy wonder of the Conservative Party, emerged as the hot favorite yesterday to win the three-way race to lead the devastated party.

Political pundits and bookmakers agreed that the former Welsh secretary came out of the first round of balloting as the candidate to beat. Hague has positioned himself at the political center of the party.

Former finance minister Kenneth Clarke, 56, comes from the party's left wing and led the five candidates in round one of the race to succeed former Prime Minister John Major.

But Hague — who ran a close second — became the front runner after the two candidates with the lowest vote totals dropped out of the race and threw their support behind him.

Hague's supporters yesterday urged right-wing standard bearer John Redwood, who placed third, to stand aside so he could face a runoff against Clarke in the second round next Tuesday.

But Redwood, 45, who resigned from the Cabinet two years ago to

run against Major in the 1994 leadership election, said he would not quit.

"This is going to be an exciting, close and unpredictable race," he told a news conference. "You just watch: this team is going places." Both Redwood and Clarke predicted they will pick up votes from supporters of the two candidates who dropped out, former Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley, 53, and former Home Secretary Michael Howard, 55.

Major announced his resignation as party leader immediately after the Labor Party's massive victory in the May 1 election.

Hague has positioned himself in the center of a party splintered by the right wing's opposition to closer ties with the European Union.

The 164 Conservative lawmakers voting in Tuesday's ballot gave Clarke 49 votes, Hague 41 votes, Redwood 27 votes, Lilley 24 votes, and Howard 23 votes.

In the second round of balloting, a candidate needs a simple majority of 83 to win. If there is no winner, the top two candidates will face a runoff on June 19.

McVeigh's mother testifies

DENVER (AP) — Timothy McVeigh's mother was the final witness yesterday as the defense rested their four-day case, leaving it up to jurors to decide whether the convicted Oklahoma City bomber should be sentenced to die for the deadliest act of terrorism on US soil.

McVeigh's tearful mother said her son is a human being who deserves to live, "not the monster he's been portrayed as." Defense attorneys then rested their penalty phase case and US District Judge Richard Matsch recessed court for the day. Closing arguments are set for today.

The same panel that convicted

McVeigh of murder and conspiracy charges last week will decide whether he should die by injection or get life behind bars for the April 19, 1995, Oklahoma City bombing that killed 168 people.

Americans have been watching the case closely, and national polls have shown that most believe McVeigh should receive the death penalty.

"I still cannot believe to this day he could have caused this devastation," McVeigh's mother, Mildred Frazier, said as she read from a prepared statement. "Yes, I am pleading for my son's life. He is a human being."

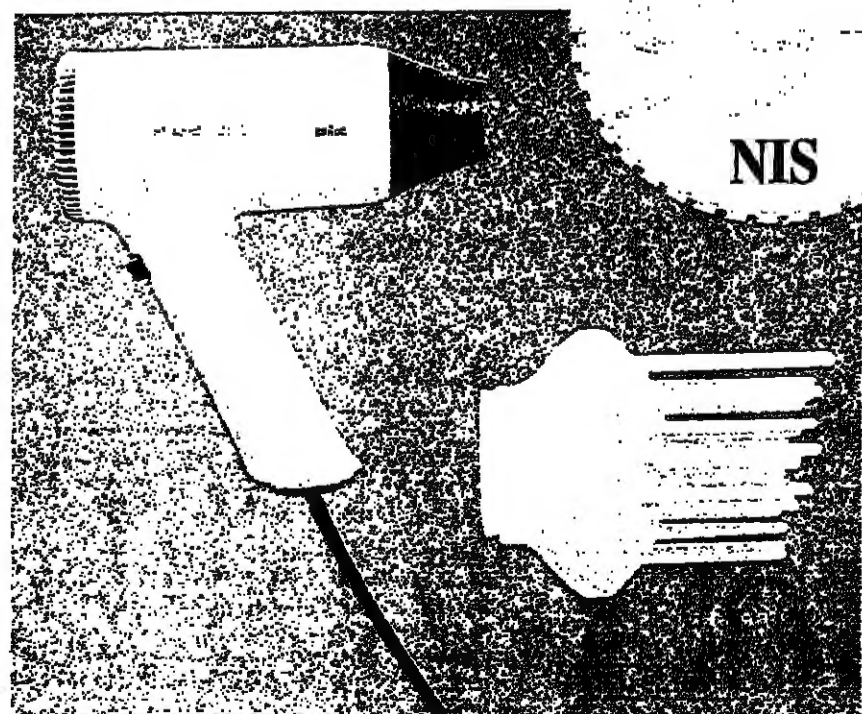
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Taking charge in Hong Kong: China's military challenge

By JOHN LEICESTER

HONG KONG (AP) — Dressed in civvies, the two Chinese soldiers emerged warily from their barracks and ventured off into the towering cityscape. An hour later they were back, clutching shopping bags.

As an exercise in sampling the Hong Kong experience, it was pretty low key.

And that's how Hong Kong would like things to stay. Of all the issues thrown up by the British colony's return to Chinese rule on July 1, few are more sensitive than the prospect of Chinese soldiers roaming the city.

People in Hong Kong have too many negative images of the People's Liberation Army.

Older people, refugees, remember it as the enforcer of the communist regime they fled. A more recent memory is of PLA troops gunning down unarmed protesters around Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Others, looking at the army's involvement in Chinese business, imagine arrogant, corrupt officers muscling in on Hong Kong's business turf.

But Maj. Gen. Bryan Dutton, commander of Hong Kong's outgoing British garrison, says the Chinese army knows it has an image problem and wants to correct it by performing well in Hong Kong.

The incoming Chinese troops have been carefully selected, trained, clothed in new uniforms and given a clearly defined mission, Dutton said.

"What surprised me," he said, "is their sensitive awareness of the image that the wider world has of the PLA, the adverse image, and their determination to use Hong Kong as a means of changing that." Certainly, the two soldiers strolling out of the Prince of Wales barracks — the British army headquarters that the Chinese will soon take over — appeared anything but threatening.

Back in China, they would have been in uniform, objects of respect, admiration, even fear. Here, wearing slacks and T-shirts, they hemmed and hawed with embarrassment when asked how they liked the city. "I'm afraid we don't have anything to say," one said.

"We've only just arrived, there are very many things we are not familiar with," said the other. "We don't really have an impression yet." They are part of a PLA detachment of 196 unarmed troops that started arriving in April to prepare for a much-larger contingent expected to march, sail and fly in hours after the midnight change of flags.

After July 1, "it would be best if we didn't see them. They should stay inside and let us take care of business," Lam Daiyau, an electrician, said as he walked past the barracks in central Hong Kong.

"Hopefully, they will behave like the British army," said Russell Mak, an accountant.

"I wouldn't feel easy seeing people with guns, especially AK-47s," Mak said. "We would think that they may start shooting people."

Albright snubs Hong Kong handover

News agencies

HONG KONG — China buried months of speculation yesterday by announcing that its head of state, President Jiang Zemin, will attend the ceremony marking the handover of Hong Kong to Beijing at midnight on June 30.

This first visit to the territory, a British colony for 156 years, by a top leader of China and the chief of its Communist Party is due to last just a few hours.

Jiang will return to the Chinese capital for Beijing's own celebrations of its recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong.

But he will remain long enough to attend an investiture ceremony for the post-colonial administration that has all the makings of unraveling into a diplomatic nightmare.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair also ended weeks of speculation yesterday and confirmed he would be attending the ceremony to mark the handover.

Blair, asked in parliament whether Britain owed a moral duty to the people of Hong Kong which would not end with the handover ceremony, told the House of Commons: "I do agree. I think that is important. I will be attending the ceremony myself."

But US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's decision to boycott the ceremony for Hong Kong's unelected legislature threatens to cast a shadow over its swearing-in, with Gov. Chris Patten suggesting others might follow her lead.

China reacted coolly Tuesday to the news from Washington, saying guests attending the change of sovereignty must make their own decisions.

A member of Hong Kong's incoming government hinted that guests who boycotted the ceremony risked damaging their country's relationship with China.

China plans to disband Hong Kong's elected legislature and replace it with a largely self-selecting provisional body, swearing it in



Democratic Party leader Martin Lee speaks to reporters after meeting with Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa yesterday. (Reuters)

90 minutes after the change of flags, and in the same buildings where Albright and some 40 other foreign ministers will be assembled for the handover.

Beijing will swear in future leader Tung Chee-hwa and the future judiciary as well as the legislature.

Tung welcomed Jiang's presence even as Britain and its Western allies attacked the new

assembly, questioning its legitimacy and the need for it to replace the democratically elected Legislative Council.

Jiang's participation shows "how much importance the central (Chinese) government attaches to Hong Kong's reunification with the motherland, and I feel very honored to have them taking part in these historic ceremonies," Tung said.

"I have roundly condemned the action of the Chinese government in dismissing the elected legislative council of Hong Kong and the intention to replace it on July 1 with a legislative council which has been appointed by a committee set up by Beijing," Britain's Foreign Secretary Robin Cook told parliament.

Cook spoke shortly after the US snub to China. Members of the US

Congress endorsed Albright's decision.

"Particularly because the swearing-in of Beijing's appointees also accomplishes the swearing-out of the democratically elected representatives of the people of Hong Kong...representatives of the United States should not dignify such a proceeding," said Republican Christopher Cox of California.

Sri Lanka army mops up after big Tamil attack

COLOMBO (Reuters) — Sri Lankan troops began clearing northern areas yesterday after a huge attack by separatist Tamil guerrillas on the army's forward defenses left more than 250 dead, the Defense Ministry said.

"At present, the area has stabilized completely and troops are engaged in clearing the vast area affected by the terrorist attack," a ministry statement said.

It said more than 1,000 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels took part in the pre-dawn attack on Tuesday on the army's defenses at Thandikulam and Nochchimodai, north of the government-held frontline town of Vavuniya, 220 km north of Colombo.

The rebels made a desperate attempt to attack the army's field headquarters and artillery gun positions at Thandikulam, the statement said. The attackers persisted into Tuesday night, but security forces defending positions held on, it added.

"The situation was brought under control completely by the troops, forcing the terrorists to withdraw northwards with their dead and wounded," it said.

The attack, the biggest by the LTTE since security

forces launched a major offensive into their northern Wanni stronghold on May 13, left at least 58 special forces troops and 210 rebels dead, according to the Defense Ministry.

But military officials said they had recovered 70 bodies of soldiers as of yesterday afternoon and added that the final loss to the military could be as high as 100 dead.

The ministry statement said 12 officers, 86 troops, and more than 300 rebels were wounded in the attack.

An aid worker in Vavuniya told Reuters that five civilians, including a seven-year-old girl, had been killed in the fighting. Some 35 were wounded and admitted to Vavuniya hospital, he added.

Aid workers and military officials said several soldiers and at least 13 policemen were missing after the attack. The casualty figures put out by the Defense Ministry conflicted with the rebels' account of the attack which said the military's toll could be more than 300.

The rebels' clandestine Voice of Tigers radio said its fighters had killed more than 300 soldiers while only 50 rebels had died.

China mudslide leaves 150 missing

BEIJING — About 150 people are believed to have died in a landslide that hit four villages in southwestern China's Sichuan province, a government spokesman said yesterday.

Heavy rains beginning last Thursday also produced slides and floods in Hunan, in central China, and Yunnan, in the southwest, where 34 were reported killed.

The storms caused up to 300 millimeters (12 inches) of rainfall within 12 hours in some areas, a Hunan official said.

In Sichuan, mud and rock slid down a mountain after two days of heavy rain in the Liangshan region in the Daliang mountains, near the border with Yunnan province, said a Sichuan official who gave her name as Ms. Xiang.

Three bodies have been recovered, and the rest are missing,

she said. The *China Daily* reported yesterday that 300 people were injured, 84 houses collapsed and 400 hectares of farmland was buried.

The villages were home to 1,527 people in an autonomous region of the Yi ethnic minority, Ms. Xiang said. The remote, mountainous area is about 1,750 km southwest of Beijing.

Thirty-four people died in floods and rock slides in Yiliang, Yongshan and Dagan counties in Yunnan province, said a disaster relief office spokesman who gave his name as Mr. Dai.

Floods from the storm in Hunan were most severe in the city of Liuyang and in Changsha County, said a provincial spokesman.

Deaths were reported, but the

spokesman refused to say how many were killed or missing. More than 10,000 buildings collapsed in Changsha, the capital of Hunan, he said.

Meanwhile, authorities in the southwestern city of Chongqing plan to relocate 337,200 people by 2000 from areas to be flooded by the giant Three Gorges Dam, the official Xinhua News Agency reported yesterday.

Resettlement of some 1.2 million people from the area to be inundated should be complete by 2009, the report said.

The dam is the target of criticism by environmentalists, scholars and human rights activists because of the vast scope of its damage to the surrounding countryside, archaeological sites and the lives of its evicted neighbors. (Agencies)

Chretien reshuffles cabinet

OTTAWA (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien retained popular finance and foreign ministers, but made changes in most other posts yesterday as he overhauled the Cabinet for his second term.

The new, 28-member Cabinet contained only five newcomers, but many prominent veterans were shifted to different portfolios following a closer-than-expected victory for Chretien's Liberal Party in the June 2 federal election.

Among the senior Cabinet members given new posts was Allan Rock, named health minister after a rough stint as justice minister dealing with such controversial issues as gay rights and gun control.

Chretien also dropped Sheila Copps, whose combative style sometimes caused her problems, from the post of deputy prime minister. She kept her post as heritage minister, to handle issues such as public broadcasting, national parks and cultural policy.

The two most influential Cabinet ministers remain in their posts. Finance Minister Paul Martin has won praise for slashing Canada's deficit by two-thirds since 1993, while Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy has gained popularity for defending Canada's relations with Cuba against US criticism.

Copps was replaced as deputy prime minister by Herb Gray, a long-serving member of Parliament who had been solicitor-general, overseeing federal police and prisons.

Rock was replaced as justice minister by Anne McLellan, a former University of Alberta law professor who had been natural resources minister.

In the election, the Liberal Party fared poorly in the two western-most provinces, Alberta and British Columbia.

To shore up support in British Columbia, Chretien named former Transport Minister David Anderson — who is from the Pacific province — as the new fisheries minister.

Early Unabomber victim dies

BERKELEY (AP) — Diogenes Angelakos, a pioneer in the field of microwaves, antennas and electromagnetic waves and one of the Unabomber's first victims, has died of prostate cancer. He was 77.

Angelakos had battled the disease for more than six years and continued working until three weeks ago, the school said.

Angelakos was director of the Electronics Research Laboratory at UC-Berkeley on July 2, 1982, when he grabbed the handle of a booby-trapped package in a coffee room.

It exploded, mangle his right hand. He escaped more serious injury when a gasoline can attached to the bomb failed to explode.

He eventually learned to write again and in 1994 said he had put the attack behind him.

"You get hit by a car, and you are careful about crossing the street for awhile. Then you're back to where you are," he said. "You don't go around shaking every time you get a letter."

UN invites Cypriot leaders for summit

NICOSIA (AP) — UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan yesterday invited the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders for a summit to discuss the reunification of Cyprus.

The invitations were delivered by Annan's special resident representative in Cyprus, Gustave Feissel, to President Glafcos Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash.

Feissel told reporters after a 30-minute meeting with

Clerides that the meeting will take place July 9 to 13 at a location near New York. Feissel said the exact site had not yet been determined.

The UN meeting will bring the two Cypriot leaders together for the first time in three years.

Clerides' spokesman, Manolis Christofides, said Annan's invitation indicated that the negotiations would continue "as long as necessary" after the initial meeting.

Denkash expressed the hope that the talks "will be a new start with a new spirit."

He added: "We will be going there to defend our position with goodwill."

Cyprus has been divided since Turkey invaded the northern third of the island in 1974. A breakaway state in the north declared by Denkash in 1983 is recognized only by Ankara.

UN-sponsored negotiations for reunification of the island in the form of a two-zone federation have been deadlocked for years.

The Turkish side also has rejected United Nations resolutions demanding the withdrawal of the estimated 35,000 Turkish troops and 50,000 mainland settlers from the North and the return of all refugees to their homes.

President Clinton has named Richard Holbrooke as his special envoy for Cyprus. Holbrooke, who brokered a settlement of the Balkans War, told the London *Financial Times* the situation in Cyprus "could explode any time" and bring NATO allies Greece and Turkey into direct conflict.

New Hampshire tops poll as best place to live

NASHUA, New Hampshire (AP) — An annual ranking of the best places to live in the United States, released yesterday by *Money* magazine, has three cities from New Hampshire among the top six spots.

Ranked No. 1 overall is Nashua, a former mill town along the Massachusetts border with a booming economy and surrounding areas that "ooze classic Yankee charm," *Money* said in its July issue.

Matthew Chabot, co-owner of the Nashua Athletic Club, has no problem understanding why his city is No. 1. "It's centrally located. You want to hit the mountains, you're there. You want to go to the ocean, you're there. You want to do the lakes, you're there. You want to go to the city...you're 45 minutes from Boston," he said.

In fifth place is Portsmouth, a picturesque community along New Hampshire's short Atlantic coastline. Manchester, the state's biggest city with a population of

only about 100,000, is sixth.

Davenport, Iowa, ranked last among the 300 largest US metropolitan areas. *Money* said Davenport is still struggling from a farm recession of the mid-1980s and has a high violent-crime rate.

"Even so, residents feel their place is a pretty darn fine spot to live," *Money* said diplomatically.

In second place this year was Rochester, Minnesota (No. 3 on last year's list); followed by the area including Monmouth and Ocean counties, New Jersey (38); and Punta Gorda, Florida (2).

Money's list is compiled by asking readers to name factors most important to them in the 300 largest metropolitan areas.

Among the key criteria listed this year were low crime, clean water and air, good schools and inexpensive living.

Completing the top 10 were last year's winner, Madison, Wisconsin; San Jose, California (19); Jacksonville, Florida (20); and Fort Walton Beach, Florida (18).

US to pay \$819m. in UN arrears

WASHINGTON (AP) — After lengthy negotiations, the Clinton administration has reached agreement with key senators on a deal under which the United States would pay \$819 million of its UN arrears over three years.

The repayment plan is conditioned on cuts in UN spending and a reduction in UN personnel of 1,000, said the officials, asking not to be identified.

Several issues are still under

negotiation with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including the rate at which the \$819 million will be repaid. The actual arrearage is much larger although estimates vary as its actual size.

According to the officials, the US share of United Nations costs would drop from 25 percent to 20 percent by the year 2,000. The administration had opposed that provision but bowed to congress-

sional wishes, the officials said.

They predicted strong resistance by other UN members to the provision because it would mean an increase in their UN allotments.

The officials said the US would be reimbursed for UN peacekeeping activities for which it had previously picked up the entire tab. One example cited by the officials was the US evacuation of Pakistani troops in Somalia as UN peacekeepers.

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CAVEAT EMPTOR! Supermarkets raided for cash register errors

By RUTHIE BLUM
Good news for all you consumers who keep writing to ask what can be done about the frequent discrepancy between prices listed on supermarket items and their listing on the cash register, which reads the magnetic strips on those same items.
The only advice I've been able to give is to check every item - either while it is being rung up on the register, or against the receipt.



But as I am all too aware, it is well nigh impossible to unload groceries on the conveyor belt, jump to the other end to stuff the groceries into shopping bags, and keep an eye on the cash register all at the same time.
In any case, as far as checking each item on the receipt is concerned, many consumers are simply too tired after having shopped to and from the market to return for a small refund, due to cash register error.
Well, the good news is that the Ministry of Industry and Trade has been cracking down on supermarkets.
The Supersol chain was fined NIS 5,000 for misleading consumers in two of its branches: one on Ben-Yehuda Street in Tel Aviv, and the other at the Hypercol located on Moshe Shor Street in Holon. A surprise check of several stores revealed that there were discrepancies between the price of certain items and the amount the customer was charged for them at the cash register. For example, two packages of "nylonit" were sold at NIS 9.99 instead of NIS 9.49, as was listed on the product. A box of "Rollers" cereal from Telma was sold at NIS 14.55, instead of the NIS 12.90 which was listed on the product.
Similar raids were conducted by the Trade Ministry - following a slew of complaints from disgruntled consumers - on Co-op Blue Square and Shefa Mehadrin Stores in Ashdod, Bnei Brak, Ramat Hasharon, and in Tel Aviv were examined by ministry supervisors. The following discrepancies were noted: Liquid "Top Sod" detergent was sold at NIS 6.90, instead of its list price of NIS 6.65. A bottle of wine (brand not specified) was sold at NIS 20.50, instead of NIS 18.65.
Co-op Blue Square was fined NIS 8,000 (plus an additional NIS 7,000 bond), and Shefa Mehadrin was fined NIS 4,000 (plus an additional NIS 5,000).

In a different area of consumerism - jewelry - the Ministry of Industry and Trade has also been keeping an eye on the goose that lays the golden eggs. The Gold River jewelry store on Akiva Street in Bnei Brak was fined NIS 10,000 (plus an additional NIS 15,000 bond) for misleading consumers about the purity of their gold. Since the gold on sale had not been sent to the Standards Institute for examination of its pure-gold content, the jewelry in the shop listed as 14K gold was, in fact, less.
Another jewelry store, Apollo on Herzl Street in Netanya, was caught selling gold without a karat marking. Here, too, the gold had not been sent to the Standards Institute for examination, thereby misleading the consumer. The owners of Apollo were fined NIS 6,000 (plus an additional NIS 5,000 bond).

You are invited to offer personal stories of goods and services in this country. Write to: Ruthie Blum, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem.

FLAIR Tanks invade the fashion front



Model tanks (clockwise from above): Max & Co.'s minimalist version; Dorit Sadeh's classic plaid; Dorin Frankfurt's slip dress; Bracha Bar-On's provocative clinger.

By GREER FAY CASHMAN
If the peace process ever gets back on track, tanks may someday withdraw from the region's battlefields. But on the fashion front, tanks have invaded, and it's going to take a major revolution to effect a retreat.
No matter whose collection you look at, tank tops feature prominently in the season's convoys.
Bracha Bar-On's clinging, low-cut version is provocative. Dorit Sadeh's neckline is just a tiny bit higher and her fit a tad looser, which, coupled with the tiny check fabric, gives her creation a little more class.
Max and Co., which also favors a looser fit and better quality, goes in for higher necklines but shorter skirts.
At Hamashbir, the fabrics are mainly synthetics, the hemlines slightly lower and the silhouettes designed for comfort, both in Hamashbir's own private-label groupings and those of other manufacturers whose merchandise it markets.
Gershon Bram gives a hint of Empire-line ambience to his tank dresses by incorporating a horizontal seam below the bust. In his fancier offerings, the seam is enhanced by a satin ribbon.

ALMOST as pervasive as tank tops are slip dresses. Dorin Frankfurt has both long and short versions, which even at sale time are a little too expensive, considering the workmanship and the fact that similar items are readily available for under NIS 100 at all bazaar shops that stock clothing.
The beauty of the slip dress is that not just secular women can wear them.
Whereas tank dresses are often somewhat tailored, which makes wearing a blouse or T-shirt underneath them awkward or uncomfortable, the slip dress is frequently worn over a T-shirt.
Only a couple of years back, the wearing of T-shirts under sleeveless dresses of any kind was the summer uniform of the national-religious camp.
Today it's a general trend which blurs the divisions between the religiously observant and their secular sisters. Although it tends to look a little shlocky, around these parts ease and comfort are important considerations. No one wants to feel constricted in the heat of an Israeli summer.
Mini-length slip dresses offer several options. They can be worn solo or as tunics over Bermuda shorts, pants or straight-falling maxi skirts. Alternatively, they can be made sexier by being tucked inside skirts, shorts or pants, and they look great under mannish shirts tied at the waist. Those made of flimsier fabrics can also double as sleepwear.



It's nice work if you can get it...

Imagine a job jetting from Hawaii to Florida, from Cape Hatteras to southern California, stopping just to wiggle your toes in white, powdery sand and wade up to your waist in blue water.
Coastal geomorphologist and University of Maryland professor Stephen Leatherman is stuck with it.
As one of the US's top experts on beach erosion, he has compiled a list of America's best beaches for the past eight years. He spends much of his time on an endless

summer tour of America's best oceanfront property.
"I don't know the last time I saw a mountain," Leatherman said. "I vacation at the beach, too."
His students call him "Dr. Beach" and so do countless tourism officials clamoring to get their resorts on his top-20 list, which comes out just in time for the Memorial Day weekend that kicks off the summer season.
No. 1 this year was Hulopoe, on a small Hawaiian island recently opened to the public. It features a

sheltered, crescent-shaped beach where you can wade far out on the soft sand.
"It's a great find," Leatherman said.
All of this began in 1989 when a writer with *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine called Leatherman as he was preparing for a trip. With little time to talk, he just rattled off his favorite beaches in the US.
When Leatherman returned from his trip, he saw the magazine. On the cover was the tease: "Top Beaches."

Sanibel Island, Florida, had been listed No. 8.
"They said: 'Next year, we're going to be No. 6!'" Leatherman said. "I asked, 'Next year?'"
In Daytona Beach, Florida, officials wanted to know how they could be left off the list.
"I told them they allowed vehicles on the beach. You can't lie down on the beach without the possibility of getting run over," Leatherman said.
One caller demanded to know what Leatherman's criteria were for ranking the beaches. He realized he didn't really have any, so he spent the next two years perfecting his "Beach Rating Scale Questionnaire." It measures beach size, air and water temperature, sand color and softness, wave size and current strength, and water cleanliness. The first official Dr. Beach list came out in 1991 with Kapulua, Hawaii, at No. 1.
Leatherman refuses the many offers of free accommodations offered by those looking to make the list. The doctor is a pariah in

California, which is perpetually excluded from the list.
What? The home of *Baywatch* and the Beach Boys doesn't make the list?
Too crowded, says Leatherman. Also, the water is too cold and the waves are often big enough to be considered dangerous.
So what about the beaches near his home, like those in Ocean City, Maryland?
Leatherman says erosion has taken its toll on many mid-Atlantic beaches, making them too narrow

for his liking. His ideal beaches are in remote corners of Hawaii or the Florida Panhandle, with fine, white sand and gentle, warm waters.
As with all of Leatherman's winners, Hulopoe will be retired from the list after this year, giving a chance to some other beach.
Leatherman said he will keep doing the list, partly because he believes it may encourage officials to keep their resorts clean and accommodating.
Tough job, but somebody has to do it. (AP)

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Cohabiting with Europe's voters

In an opinion poll carried out on NBC-Europe's Internet site last week, nearly 70 percent of respondents said job creation was a more important political priority than monetary union. Even allowing the generous assumption that many of the remaining 30 percent favoring the monetary issue were suggesting both should be given equal attention, it was a significant tails call for the proposed new euro coin.

The vote of the computer-literate Europeans tallied well with other indications that a battle is brewing between the eurocurrency enthusiasts and the status quo warriors. A more scientific poll yesterday revealed a similar large majority — nearly 60 percent — of French people think likewise. They said the new Socialist-led government of Lionel Jospin should seek from its European partners new conditions for joining a single currency, rather than stretching the economy and the social fabric to breaking point just to meet the criteria set by the Maastricht Treaty for monetary union by 1999 — mainly the strict three percent deficit target.

European Monetary Union (EMU) may already have lost the battle — but its supporters seem determined to slug on at any cost. The German government was badly bruised by the recent debacle over the Bundesbank proposal to revalue the gold reserves to meet Maastricht criteria — a move ridiculed by the media as "cooking the books." The recent French elections provide a fine metaphor. The French electorate chose Jospin and his sturdy old socialist (namely employment) values — putting a final boot into the Gaullist arrogance of a presidency that has too often grown used to believing it has a right to tell the French what to do rather than ask them. This also is how many Europeans feel about European Union diktats from Brussels and the growing resistance to the Maastricht strait-jacket could easily develop into a union-wide

struggle between the suspicious voters and their over-enthusiastic leaders. In the last six weeks, Britain, France and Ireland have given their governments the boot, ignoring in the process (in the case of Britain and Ireland) the administrations' spectacular economic successes.

Yet French President Jacques Chirac, smarting from blunder in calling the election, seems determined to ignore the mood of the electorate and to use his presidential authority in foreign policy to insist the Jospin government stick to the timetable for monetary union. French European Affairs Minister Pierre Moscovici said he wanted a delay to study again the EU pact agreed on in Dublin late last year. Thus, already France is speaking with two discordant voices in advance of next week's crucial European summit in Amsterdam — as many predicted it would and Chirac pooh-pooed.

The wider issue represented by the "French metaphor" is that a struggle has begun to define whether the European Union is to be primarily an economic or a social entity. Thus Jospin — and probably to a less ideological extent Britain's Tony Blair — need an EU agreement to balance the Maastricht package with economic and employment clauses at the summit.

If traditional European attitudes were to prevail, social and employment concerns would be likely to win out over cut-and-thrust free market and monetary union. But with a fiercely competitive United States breathing down their necks, the Europeans are not so sure any more. After all it is downsized and globalized America that has both market success and a 4.8 percent jobless rate. Other Europeans may scoff at the troubles of Jospin and Chirac "cohabiting" — but their conflicting attitudes are no different than a European Union that seems to be losing sight of where it is going. It had better decide soon, and decide clearly, or fall apart at the seams like an Italian government.

Pride of Africa

First Liberia, Angola, Rwanda; then Zaire, Sierra Leone, and now Congo. The onward march of Africa's conflicts seems relentless, driven not by a hunger for democracy, but by a lust for power, revenge, or a Swiss bank account.

There are areas of hope of course — Uganda is often cited, though the murky shadows of its involvement in former Zaire remain unexplored.

Rebellion, coup, contrived instability and assassination remain the pathways to power across most of Africa. There is never enough money for infrastructure or development — there is always enough for mountains of arms and palaces of kitsch. If the survival of the fittest is nature's way, Africa must be attempting to evolve the dictator as a viable species.

Yet again, it is only South Africa that provides any hope for the continent — one of the richest in the world in human and natural potential. Unfortunately, there is precious little sign of the unfortunate states of Central Africa learning even the most fundamental lessons from the way South Africa has transformed itself from an apartheid caterpillar to a rainbow butterfly.

While Nelson Mandela's new state is bent on

forging a united multi-racial society, its neighbors to the north remain far too busy killing one another, for whatever obscure reasons, to even try Mandela's way. Yet they and the ludicrously pompous and ineffectual Organization of African Unity have become more dependent week by week on South African diplomacy to save them from an even worse fate.

A minor new item yesterday probably passed unnoticed amid the gunfire across Africa. A key American credit rating agency gave South Africa its second investment grade credit rating (BBB minus), indicating growing confidence in the country. The South African finance ministry pointed out that the rating is significant since certain US investors are restricted in terms of their investments when a country lacks two such investment grade ratings from US-accredited agencies. South Africa can now access a wider array of capital sources in the United States, as it continues its steady journey as a major emerging nation.

One can only wonder when the penny will drop in the Congos and other blighted nations. Mandela in a couple of short years has become the pride of Africa, in a continent whose leaders have little else to be proud of.

DLE 97



It's no-win in Lebanon

Israeli parents are protesting about their sons fighting and dying in the security zone. Fifteen years after the Lebanon war, IDF soldiers are still there, bravely standing up to Hizbullah in a bid to restrain the terrorists from attacking Israeli border towns and villages.

Echoing the complaints of the Israeli parents is an ongoing media barrage of the same arguments we heard during the fighting in 1982 — that the war was worthless, that it achieved nothing; worst of all, that 600 died in a futile cause.

This was the battle cry of the Labor Party and its left-wing allies as they campaigned vigorously against the war promoted and launched by the Likud government. Prime minister Menachem Begin and defense minister Ariel Sharon were specifically blamed for causing the deaths of so many young Israelis.

In reality, the Lebanon war achieved major aims.

There was relative peace on our northern border for several years. Yasser Arafat's brutal PLO regime was driven out of Lebanon into Tunisian exile. Its members languished in their luxurious villas and seaside homes and watched their power withering away.

The PLO was bankrupt in every sense, until Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin rescued it under the impression that Arafat was the ideal partner for peacemaking.

Let's take a dispassionate look at what has happened since 1982. Within a year, neither Begin nor Sharon was in office. In 1984, Rabin became defense minister in a national unity government, while Peres was prime minister. Six months later, the two men decided to pull out of Lebanon and hand a belt of land known as the security zone bordering Israel's northern border to Israel's Christian Lebanese allies.

Sharon, then minister of industry and trade, was the only voice to oppose this new policy. He argued that the zone was too narrow from a military point of view, and that it would not serve the purpose of defending Galilee from the threat of terrorist rocket attacks.

Sharon's views were rejected. His outlook was in direct contrast to the oft-repeated claim of

URI DAN
DENNIS EISENBERG

Rabin/Peres that they had saved Israeli soldiers from the quagmire of Lebanon.

"We are bringing the boys back home," was the repeatedly-trumpeted slogan.

What happened to the brave words of left-wing politicians and their self-proclaimed intellectual elite, who claimed they could solve the Lebanese riddle (in contrast to the macho pretensions of

losses occur with heart-wrenching regularity. Hence the understandable anger and bitterness of the parents who are demonstrating.

The security zone remains indefensible, as the IDF fights under frustrating political restraint, one hand tied behind its back.

In an attempt to avoid casualties the air force has been sent in repeatedly, and it does succeed in destroying targets here and there. But in no way does it seriously weaken Hizbullah's ever-growing armed muscle.

In July 1993 Rabin, in his twin roles of prime and defense minister, launched his massive "Accountability" bombardment of our "intellectual elite," even if here, large as life, was the much-denigrated Likud "bravura-not-brain" mentality, back in all but name.

The inevitable truce took place, with Israel agreeing to an accord unique in military history.

Hizbullah was given a license to kill Israeli soldiers in the security zone. Their "concession" to us was an agreement not to fire rockets across the border.

When Peres took the helm following Rabin's death, he also paid the price of living with an inadequate security belt in the north.

This ultra-intellectual-turned-warrior saw his Grapes of Wrath operation result in the accidental slaying of 105 Lebanese civilians at a UNIFIL base at Kana.

The world was reminded of Kana this week, when the UN demanded \$1.78 million from Israel as compensation for its losses — overlooking the fact that its harboring of civilians at a UNIFIL base was totally illegal in the first place.

While one cannot but feel for the parents demonstrating for the safety of their sons in Lebanon, they must realize that it was bad decisions made by those in power over the past 12 years that created the current no-win situation.

The parents' anger and trepidation is valid, but national security considerations must take precedence over emotion.

It is clear that if Israel leaves the security zone, the IDF will soon be fighting Hizbullah in Galilee.

The writers are authors of *The Mossad: Secrets of the Israel Secret Service and other books on the Middle East*.

There are plenty of tears, but no end in sight as IDF soldiers pay the price of 12 years of bad political decision-making

Begin/Sharon?

So sure were they of their intellectual superiority that they didn't even notice that stepping into the vacuum left by the PLO's departure was a Syrian and Iranian-financed terror organization called Hizbullah.

Rabin stood passively by as these PLO clones built up their infrastructure into the powerful (and still-expanding) force it is today.

Rabin became Israel's longest-serving defense minister. Other than a two-year break in 1990-2 when Moshe Arens held the post, Rabin remained at the helm of defense until his assassination, even while he served a prime minister.

Israelis are still bogged down in Lebanon, fighting, and dying. Over 400 have been killed in the post-Lebanese war period, and the

God left out

LARRY DERFNER

This movement among secular Jews to study the Torah, the Talmud, etc. — to "reclaim their heritage" — just seems to fall short. It doesn't have much oomph.

Not that it's useless; not at all. Every self-declared Jew ought to know something about his history. The same goes for every half-way serious Christian, Moslem or Zoroastrian.

Education is a good thing. We're all agreed on that.

But the problem with secular, or humanistic, or "free" Judaism is that it appears to be trying to create something like an alternative to religion, or at least an ideology, out of an atheistic reading of Jewish religious books. And here the movement is out of its depth.

Take the new proposal for a secular hesder yeshiva. Evidently the idea is that if the Orthodox can have them, why can't the secular?

But if studious Orthodox boys need a hesder yeshiva, it's because three years of unbroken army service forces them to put aside their Jewish learning which, for them, is a calling, a belief, a way of life.

For secular boys, studying Judaism is educational, but no more. For them, it's like studying chemical engineering or criminology. Taking three years off to be a soldier doesn't threaten their souls.

Judaism doesn't penetrate as deeply with them as it does with religious Jews, and it's pretentious for the secular to claim it does.

Or take the *tikkun hazot* (all-night religious study session) that Meretz held in Tel Aviv on Shavuot.

The plan was to read how the ancient Jewish teachings support "human dignity and freedom" and all these other wonderful Meretz ideas, and the Meretz people were saying how the Torah belongs to them no less than it does to the haredim, and — what was this all about?

If they were trying to show that there are Jewish roots to their

The secular Judaism movement treats religion like an optional feature

politics, and that the Torah is not their enemy, they had a good case to make.

But this amounts to a political revival meeting, not a religious one.

Why did Meretz have to dress it up as a Shavuot study session? Why take on these religious trappings, why try to imitate, or compete with, the religious?

Inevitably, it's a sterile exercise. There's something missing here, and that something, brothers and sisters, is God.

The secular Judaism movement treats religion — the belief in God — as if it's an optional feature in the Jewish enterprise of the ages. I'm sorry, it's not.

Judaism may be a broad, comprehensive culture, but it has one vital organ, and that organ is religion.

What drives Judaism if it's just history or philosophy, a matter for curiosity?

If you take the belief in God out of the reading of Jewish texts, then you don't even have to be Jewish to be a practicing secular Jew. The pope, I'm sure, knows the Torah better than nearly all "free" Jews will ever know it.

THIS is not a new Judaism the Jewish humanists are coming up with. They can read the Torah and Talmud in their hesder yeshiva, in their *beit midrash* and study sessions; but unless they are searching for God, then what they're engaged in is education for education's sake.

There's nothing wrong with that — but it's not a substitute for religion. It doesn't have nearly as powerful a meaning.

It's not an ideology, either. A secular reading of Judaism teaches Jews about their past; but it doesn't point them in any particular direction toward the future. It doesn't offer a goal.

I say this even though I'm an atheist, leftist Jew myself. We have a problem.

We're a little out of sorts in this country, kind of rootlessly cosmopolitan. With the fall of the secular Israeli heroic ideal and the rise of religion, we seem to be having a crisis of authenticity.

I don't know where the answers are.

But while we can find plenty of value in Jewish holy books, I don't think the answers we're looking for are in them, either.

The writer is a journalist living in Tel Aviv.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OTHERS' PROPERTY

Sir, — Lag Ba'omer is behind us and we hope that most of the supermarket trolleys taken without permission (stolen) to transport firewood for the bonfires have been returned. Those used for distribution of magazines no doubt will be retained by their new "owners." Apparently the parents see no wrong in this appropriation of others' property.

The same disregard can be seen in collection of car emblems and spray painting of decorative Jerusalem stone walls. Respect for others' property should be instilled at an early age by kindergarten and primary-school teachers if the parents are unable or unwilling to do so.

Netanya.

CORRECT

Sir, — I wish to thank Judy Siegel for her accurate article of May 20 concerning Bezeq's new rates.

On the same day, the corresponding article in a Hebrew paper incorrectly reported that the intermediate rates would continue till 23:00 while Judy reported that it would continue till 22:00. This difference is of major importance to us Internet users whose children go on-line after 22:00 and still rise for school the next day. I verified the facts with Bezeq by phone and Judy's report was accurate. Thank you. Nice to know that we can depend on you.

Petah Tikva.

DUNDEE

Sir, — I would like to correct an error which appeared in Moshe Kohn's *A View from Nov* on May 16.

I assume that when he writes about the clerk, "a former Dundeean," he means that the clerk hailed from the City of Dundee, in East Scotland.

Dundee has one of the highest rates of aliyah of any city in the United Kingdom, perhaps the West. On behalf of all three of its former residents who have made aliyah, I would advise you that the correct designation is Dundonian, which, in any case, is more in keeping with our artistic and poetic temperament than Dundeean.

Beersheba.

OFFENSIVE OPERA MUSICIAN

camp), after which I gave up my subscription. Maybe the people of Germany think it is the "in thing" to turn beautiful works of art into horrible remembrances of their atrocious past and to make money from the suffering they have caused. But why should we, in Israel of all places, be subjected to this lack of sensitivity and bad taste?

I was afraid to go to *The Magic Flute*, my favorite Mozart opera, for fear of what jarring unmagical touches I might see. As a member

of the Berlin orchestra feels so obviously antagonistic towards us, I think I made the right decision. It is no excuse that he had been drinking. "Drink in, truth out," as we say in England.

There are plenty of other fine opera companies in the world which I am sure would be welcome in Israel, and until the management of the Israel Opera changes its policy of inviting German companies here, I will not be renewing my subscription.

GABRIELE ISAACS
Netanya.

PICTURE POSTSCRIPT



An asthma sufferer opens wide to swallow a live fish and herbs, believed to cure the ailment. More than 300,000 patients converged on Hyderabad on Sunday to consume the "miracle" cure. (Reuters)

مكذمان النمل

Righteous critic

A German member of parliament has become the unlikely hero of Latvian Holocaust survivors, Marilyn Henry reports



Winfried Nachtwei of Germany's Green Party

Boleslavs Maikovskis sat in the dock of a Muenster courtroom in 1990, accused of collaborating in the slaughter of 70 Latvian men, women and children in 1941. Into the courtroom walked Winfried Nachtwei, a local history teacher, leading a group of teenagers.

Here was a high-school teacher, Wini, and his students on one side, and Latvian Nazis on the other side," said Elliot Welles, a survivor of the Riga ghetto and an observer at the Maikovskis case, one of Germany's last-war-crimes trials.

"He continued to bring in class-ess to the whole trial, which nobody else did," said Welles, who served as director of a task force on Nazi war criminals for the Anti-Defamation League.

"And when Wini wasn't there, his wife was there, taking notes."

For 30 years, Boleslavs Maikovskis had lived quietly in Long Island suburb of Mineola, New York. He fled to Germany in 1987, fearing that he would be deported from the US to the Soviet Union, where he had long ago been convicted in absentia of collaborating with Nazis in the deaths of 20,000 Latvian Jews.

Although the German government put him on trial for murder, the case was closed on February 18, 1994, after four years, because of Maikovskis's failing health. Maikovskis, who had admitted to having once been the police chief of Rzekes, Latvia, died April 18, 1996. He was 92.

In 1994, the year the Maikovskis case was closed, Nachtwei changed careers. After 17 years of teaching high-school history, he ran on the Green Party ticket and was elected to the Bundestag. And this Muenster politician became the hero of the Holocaust survivors in Latvia.

Latvia was a killing ground for Jews from Nachtwei's home of Muenster. They were deported to the Riga ghetto. None came back.

Nachtwei has badgered and embarrassed his government in an unrelenting — and, so far, unsuccessful — crusade to get compensation for the estimated 16,000 survivors in Eastern Europe. They are excluded from the direct, individual reparations programs available to survivors in the West. This difference is a relic of the Cold War reparations policy, when West Germany, determined to pour hard currency into the East Bloc during

the days of the Iron Curtain.

The disparity is "absurd," according to Nachtwei. "It is not the severity of the injustice experienced in the Nazi period, but [the] present place of residence that determines whether a former ghetto or concentration camp prisoner receives restitution from the Federal Republic."

At one point, Bonn offered the few hundred Jewish claimants in the Baltic states a pension of DM 40 a month, which Nachtwei dismissed as an "alms payment."

Nachtwei, along with Green parliamentary colleagues Volker Beck and Helmut Lippelt, last fall took exception to a proposal from the German Finance Ministry to offer DM 20 million a year in compensation to Jewish and non-Jewish Nazi victims in Eastern Europe.

"We do not see how DM 20 million in the 1997 financial year for all remaining Eastern European states taken together could permit a level of benefits that we can morally justify," the three said in a letter to the government. They wanted at least twice that amount.

Nachtwei especially was incensed that Waffen SS veterans in Latvia receive pensions averaging DM 300 a month, while the survivors get nothing. "The situation of the survivors is a scandal. With the Waffen SS, it is a double scandal," he said.

"The government spreads the propaganda that it does a lot, but it

categorically rejects suitable, appropriate and honorable compensation, and continues to discriminate against Nazi victims," Nachtwei said.

In the meantime, Nachtwei has taken up a private collection for the Latvian survivors, becoming a source of material help they do not have from anywhere else. Since the Maikovskis case, Nachtwei has collected more than DM 70,000 for what he calls his "emergency relief account."

Alexander Bergmann of Riga, spokesman for the former ghetto and camp prisoners of Latvia, met Nachtwei in Riga in 1993. "I don't

hate Germans, so I wasn't surprised that such people might be in Germany," he said. "I was delighted, and I need him."

The Latvian survivors are destitute, ill and old. "Today we are 84 people. Five years ago, we were 182," Bergmann said.

"Stalin said that if there exists a person, there exists a problem. If the person disappears, the problem disappears," he said. "The people who refuse us the compensation also think this way. We will soon disappear from this world."

During a recent visit to Washington, Bergmann vowed that the Latvian survivors and Nachtwei "will struggle to the end." But he added: "What we are doing is like a mosquito bite. It is not deadly; it just itches for a while."

NACHTWEI'S ROAD TO Riga began in 1988, when he visited Belarus with a German peace group. For the first time, he heard about the Wehrmacht's genocidal methods against the civilian population. Next, he read a book on the Einsatzgruppen, which included a list of the Jews of Muenster who had been deported to Riga. The next year, he made his first trip to Riga; it was the first of 10 to Latvia.

"It's unusual, the way he puts himself into this tragedy of Eastern Europe," Welles said. "It's

unusual, the way he went forward to bring to young Germans the horrors of the Second World War."

His efforts are not limited to the struggle for compensation for survivors in Eastern Europe. Nachtwei also plotted a savvy maneuver to commemorate Bikernieki Forest, where the Nazis and their collaborators shot more than 40,000 people, including most of those from the Riga ghetto. Bikernieki Forest "has for years been a forlorn place, the bodies of the victims burned, buried, almost forgotten," Nachtwei said. He was agitated that, although there has been a German military cemetery in Riga since 1991, Germany had taken no initiative to ensure that the mass graveyard at Bikernieki was preserved in a decent manner. The small Latvian Jewish community cannot afford to properly mark or maintain it.

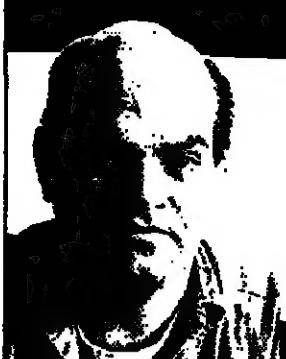
A "war graves agreement" between Germany and Latvia came into force last year. Nachtwei "saw the angles and played them brilliantly," said Nicholas Lane, head of the international affairs commission of the American Jewish Committee. The graves agreement is intended to facilitate the "dignified preservation and upkeep" of German war graves in Latvia. Those who qualify as "German war dead" are members of the German armed forces and "persons of German nationality" who were deported and died in the forced migrations.

Technically, German Jews were deprived of their citizenship, but Nachtwei persuaded the German War Graves Commission to create and care for the graves at Bikernieki, in consultation with the Jewish community. For the first time, the mass graves of former ghetto and concentration-camp prisoners — which are mostly those of the thousands of German Jews who were transported to Riga — will qualify for support as "German war graves."

"I see some success — not great success, which we need, but some steps," said Nachtwei, who is now 51. "If you see only the mountain, it is too big. If you can find the right step, the mountain seems smaller."

"Wini is not a prominent national figure in Germany. He's a local Muenster politician," said Lane. "In his case, local is not just Muenster, but also Riga."

Not Page One



Confiscate those cell phones!

By Sam Orbaum

A I first it was an irritation. "Allo. You hear me? I'm on the bus. To Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv, you hear me? Tel Aviv. Yeah, it's Roni. Yalla."

Then it became a downright nuisance.

"Allo. Allo. You hear me? No, I'm on the 405. To Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv. What's up? Yeah. Yeah. OK. Maybe tomorrow. Moshiko there? Send regards. You hear me? Moshiko. Regards from Roni. Yalla. Bye."

When it became an unmitigated hutzpa, I decided something had to be done: either grab the cell phone out of his hands and sit on it the rest of the journey, or let him carry on, and play sleuth, to learn as much as possible about this fascinating individual in the seat next to me.

For the record, during the 45-minute journey, he made six calls (two unanswered) and received five more.

"Tov, b'seder. B'seder. B'seder. You hear me? B'seder."

Ah! He's planning a rendezvous. But with who? Why? Where?

"Shimon? You hear me? I'm on the Telephone. The Telephone. I'm on the bus. Yeah, the bus. I'm going to the beach. The beach, yeah, the beach. I dunno. No, I dunno which beach. Where there's sun. Allo. Allo! (expletive deleted)"

So. He's going to the beach. And talking on the Telephone. Now we're getting somewhere.

"Ma? It's Roni. [Could be his name is Roni.] You hear me? Roni. Roni. Tell Dad I'll be home later. No, I'm not at work. I dunno. Tell him what you want, just not that I'm going to Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv. Never mind. No, I'm not going to the beach. I'm going to Rehov. Fin. Fin. What's for supper? Aw, Ma, again? No, I'll eat in Tel Aviv. Yalla. OK. OK. Ma, OK! Bye."

A well-dressed man directly in front of me is reading a newspaper. Every time Mr. Roni X starts a new conversation, our front-seat neighbor says "tsk" and puts down his newspaper. I don't believe he turned the page even once throughout the journey. I think he, too, is eavesdropping. Seems he can't help himself.

"Allo. Yael? Yael there? Yael. Yeah. Yael. Yael? Roni. You going out tonight or what? Where are you? Where are you? You going out? I'm on the bus. We're passing Lod. Lod. No, Lod. Yeah. OK. Nu? I'll think about it. What time is it now? Nu? What? Yeah. I'll pick you up at eight. Allo. I can't hear you. Can you hear me? I can't [censored expletive]."

By now I'm bursting with questions about Mr. Roni X. I want to know all about him. But I don't want to interrupt. I think of borrowing the Russian lady's phone to call him, but I don't have his number.

"Allo. Miri? Is that Miri? Can't hear you. Miri? What's up? I'm on

You got on the bus? Not yet? Nu. Nu. Yeah, so? I'm going back later. On the bus. The bus. Be in touch when you get to the station. Yeah. Nu. Be in touch.

"Allo. Who's that? Hi, what's up? No, I took the day off. I have to go see a lawyer. Yeah. I'm on the bus to Tel Aviv. You hear me? No, I told the boss I'm seeing a lawyer. Don't know when I'll be back. Yalla. Bye. What? No. Bye. Bye."

Hmmmm... so he's not going to the beach after all. Or if he is, then he's not seeing a lawyer after all. But we can say for certain that he is on the bus, and he's not at work in Jerusalem.

At this point, Mr. X (sure, he let slip his name is Roni, but without having seen his ID card, we can't be sure) sits and thinks hard for a few moments, a finger poised above the phone's "On" button. He seems to be going through his mental phone book, going from *alef* to *tav*, deciding who he should call next.

Suddenly, he springs to action.

"Allo. Allo. Yochi? Where are you? Where are you? The bus. No. Yeah. To Tel Aviv. The bus. None of his business. The bus, yeah. I'm on the Telephone. A lawyer, I have to see a lawyer, I'm meeting him on the beach. I got a ticket. Nah, nothing serious. Never mind. Yeah, on the beach, because that's where the lawyer is. The bus. No, the car's at home. The bus, you hear me? Tov, yalla."

After a few minutes, the phone tinkles again. Instinctively, Mr. X answers, but it's not his phone. This annoys him. Then a Russian lady nearby makes a call on her phone. Two other phones ring before Mr. X's next call.

"Allo. Avi Friedman please. This is Roni. He's not there? Tell him Roni called. Roni. Roni. Thank you. Yeah, Roni. Thanks."

I could have spent the entire day with Roni, who I'm now convinced that's who he is. But as always seems to happen when one is hot on the trail of a great story, we arrived in Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv, and my quarry slipped away. "You wouldn't believe the nerve of some people," I imagine he told Yael later that evening. "There I was, trying to talk on the phone, and this inconsiderate bald guy next to me spent the whole journey scribbling in his little notepad. Incredible how some people behave on a bus."

Touching base

Continued from page 1

The IDF's liaison unit has a glorious history of forging initial ties with Egypt and, most recently, Jordan. The commander of the unit, Brig-Gen. David Tzur, also currently has the only direct link with the Syrians, and this comes at the periodic meetings of the five-nation group monitoring the Golan Heights ceasefire agreement.

"Liaising is a pipeline which always remains open even in times of crisis," Mishali said, adding that the Foreign Ministry sometimes asks the unit to relay messages.

Over the past two weeks, participants in the course received lectures on topics ranging from negotiation techniques to the legal aspects of treaties. But what participants said they enjoyed the most was watching theory put into practice during field trips to the borders. They met with Jordanian and Egyptian generals and ambassadors as well as with the commanders of the regional UN forces in Lebanon, the Golan Heights, Jerusalem and the Sinai.

The course culminated in a day-long simulated conflict involving the fictitious states of Finnam, Tonari and Casadosia. The object of the simulation was to use their skills as liaison officers (LOs) to bring the tensions to a bloodless close. Often throughout the simulation, IDF instructors would suddenly change the scenarios and then let the participants work it out among themselves.

Despite it being a war-game, officers said the exercise was intense for the players. Behind the closed doors of UNOCAT, a fictitious observer force, one group sat with furrowed brows and rolled-up sleeves, going over pages of information, while others drafted an agreement or worked the field phones. Styrofoam coffee cups littered the room.

US Maj. Philip "PJ" Dermer, a stocky helicopter pilot who has seen service as a UN peacekeeper in the Middle East, said the IDF no doubt had the capability to give a course on liaising, but he questioned its objectivity.

"They sure have a hell of a lot of experience with liaising and no country comes close to them," he said. "They have many diverse and external foreign forces and internal events that require LOs in



Foreign officers at an IDF course on army liaison

Israel. It is an incredible microcosm of everything.

"But there is a secondary agenda. Sure, they brought us the Jordanian ambassador, but Brigadier General Tzur sat next to him," he continued. "We aren't getting propaganda, only the Israeli side of the story. They tell you right up front that this is how we see it from our point of view."

One of the few complaints from the foreign officers was that they didn't hear enough real "war stories" from experienced Israeli LOs. Dermer said that may have something to do with the Israeli military personality. "For the Israelis, it's counter to their culture. They say come to my house, eat my food, but when it comes to talking about the army experience... mmm." Nevertheless, during the simulated crisis, Israeli trainers would interject their experiences as examples.

IDF Maj. David Darel, a jolly veteran of the unit who has served many years on both the northern and southern fronts, put it like

this: "Being a liaison officer is dealing with initiatives and responses. The LO is always reacting and making problems go away and finding a solution on the ground without going to the higher level." And some of his tricks of the trade won't appear in textbooks.

"Sometimes the LO can't be too eager or always easy to get hold of. Make the other side come to you sometimes. In agreements never be vague. In threats, being ambiguous helps," Darel said.

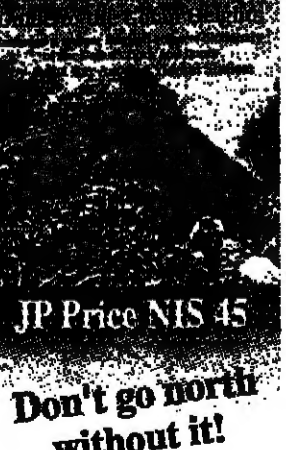
Lt.-Col. Siegfried Wolf, a veteran German infantry officer who now serves in the German Ministry of Defense's armed forces command, also praised the course. "The lessons the Israelis are teaching us are gleaned from their own experiences. They have four neighbors, each one with its very different problems, so it has given them a variety of ways to deal with it," Wolf said.

But New Zealand Maj. Steve Thompson, currently serving in the Multi National Forces in the

Sinai, said that while Israel may need a liaison unit, other armies made do by appointing liaison officers ad hoc. "One of the things they are trying to teach us is that an LO is more than an appointment. We were asked whether being an LO is a profession or a task and that is a difficult question. From the Israeli perspective it is definitely a profession. The IDF is putting up a strong argument and backing it up with its record of experience," Thompson said.

The United States Armed Forces, like nearly all nations in the world, has no liaison officer training program. With its increasing peacekeeping missions, however, troops do undergo micro training. Before sending troops to Bosnia, for example, they gave them lectures on the Balkan cultures and taught them such things as how to set up a road block.

Lt.-Col. Dieter Duschner runs the German Army's UN military observer course, which aims to give a common language and



Book Department

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BUSINESS in brief

Honda hoping to triple China JV investment

Japan's Honda Motor Co Ltd is hoping to triple its investment in an automobile parts joint venture with southern China's Dongfeng Automotive Group, a company official said yesterday. Honda had applied to the Chinese government to expand its \$25 million parts venture with Dongfeng in Guangdong province to make whole engines, said Koji Kadowaki, president of Honda Motor (China) Ltd. "The amount will be significant, almost triple what it is now," Kadowaki said but declined to give an exact figure, saying the proposal had not won approval yet.

Engines made under the expanded venture would be primarily for export but Honda would also try to sell them domestically, Kadowaki said in an interview. The engine venture would also boost Honda's efforts to start producing whole cars in China by helping it meet requirements that joint venture cars be 40-percent localized, he said. "Honda always wants to make cars in China. This has not changed, we just need an opportunity," Kadowaki said.

Honda was also talking with Dongfeng about the possibility of making a mini-car and was interested in acquiring a stake in Peugeot's troubled Guangzhou plant, he said but declined to give details. Several auto makers, including General Motors, Ford, BMW and South Korea's Hyundai, have expressed an interest in taking Peugeot's place in the project if the French car firm abandons the plant. If granted the chance to make cars in China, Honda would likely initially produce the higher-end Accord model but had its sights set on making the cheaper Civic compact, he said. Honda also had three joint ventures in China producing about 500,000 motorcycles a year, he said, adding that an annual market of about eight million units meant Honda was not looking for new partners in that area. *Reuters*

Dasa wants new Airbus with full structure

The German partner in Europe's Airbus consortium said yesterday it still wanted to turn the loose partnership into a complete corporate entity, even though the French partner sought a looser structure. Daimler-Benz Aerospace AG (DASA), a unit of car maker Daimler-Benz AG, also said an integrated organization having design and production facilities was a goal the partners had agreed earlier this year. *Reuters*

Italy's Stet sets sights on AT&T link

Italian state telecommunications giant Stet is aiming to forge an alliance with US telecoms giant AT&T Corp by the end of the year, Stet managing director Tommaso Tommasi di Vignano said yesterday. Tommasi, talking to reporters at a meeting of Italian employers here, said Stet was working intensively on reaching an accord with AT&T. He gave no details, but asked when such an accord with the US group might happen, he said: "The objective is to have an accord on an international alliance by the year end."

Stet has been seeking a big international partner for months to turn it into a major player on the increasingly competitive world telecoms stage. It has a limited cooperation deal with U.S. computer giant IBM and linked up earlier this year with AT&T to bid for the privatization of Brazil's cellular phones. *Reuters*

Former Barings boss wins appeal against SFA

Former Barings executive Ron Baker yesterday succeeded in an appeal against a Securities and Futures Authority (SFA) ruling that he had been guilty of misconduct, the British financial watchdog said. "By winning his appeal, Mr. Baker has successfully rebutted all the charges brought by the SFA against him following the failure of Barings," SFA chairman Nick Durlacher said in a statement.

The decision brings the SFA's actions relating to the collapse of Merchant bank Barings in 1995 to a close. *Reuters*

Freightliner makes leap with takeover

US truck maker Freightliner Corp, a unit of Germany's Daimler-Benz AG, has made a major competitive leap with its acquisition of Ford Motor Co's heavy truck business, Daimler's commercial vehicle chief said yesterday. Kurt Lauk said the takeover would help Daimler commercial vehicle operations to reduce costs and vastly expand its sales network. "It is the perfect acquisition," Lauk said. "Freightliner has made a big step into a business in which we were underrepresented."

On Tuesday, Daimler announced it had won US regulatory approval to buy Ford's heavy truck business, completing a deal first signed in May. Although both Ford and Daimler have refused to disclose terms of the deal, Daimler said it would mean an additional \$1 billion in sales revenues and unit sales of 20,000.

Lauk said Ford's business, which is strong in the construction market was a perfect fit with Freightliner's leading position in the long-haul truck market, but lacked in other business areas. The marriage would also help to balance out sales for Daimler's US truck operations as the two market segments react differently to economic cycles, he said. Freightliner further stood to benefit from the 250 Ford truck dealerships that Daimler will receive in the takeover, bringing its total number of US truck dealerships to 550. *Reuters*

Germany ready to agree on EU jobs chapter

By FIONA FLECK

BONN (Reuters) — Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said yesterday the German government would agree to add a jobs chapter to the Maastricht Treaty on condition it would not incur extra spending for "unfinanceable" job creation schemes.

Kinkel's remarks signalled Bonn was dropping long-standing opposition to the proposed chapter and bending to pressure from France's new left-wing government, which insists the European Union must do more to improve dire unemployment in the bloc.

"We do not want any unaccountable, unfinanceable or expensive spending programs," Kinkel told the German lower house of parliament in a government statement on the forthcom-

ing EU summit.

"An improved coordination of national measures on a European level can take us further. On these terms, the German government will agree to a jobs chapter," Kinkel said opening a parliamentary debate.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's center-right coalition proposed a parliamentary motion, which was due to be voted on after the debate, insisting that the coalition would not agree to any initiative involving the transfer of EU additional funds.

Kinkel echoed its sentiment: "Unemployment is the top priority. Eighteen million people in Europe have no job. That is the greatest challenge for politicians and that is where the chief responsibility of the EU member states lies," Kinkel said.

"We want to create jobs but this

is not just something that can be done by adopting articles of a treaty," said Kinkel, who is also a member of Kohl's junior coalition partner, the pro-business liberal Free Democrats.

Germany had opposed the idea of a jobs chapter for years, fearing it could lead to economic growth-led policies that in turn would counteract the monetary discipline a future independent European central bank would seek to impose.

But Kinkel said earlier in a newspaper interview Germany was prepared make a compromise on the issue and back France in its drive for jobs.

Tens of thousands of people marched in Paris on Tuesday to urge the EU to give higher priority to jobs and remind new French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin of his election pledge to create

700,000 jobs for young people.

Both France and Germany are struggling under the burden of record unemployment, with 12.8 percent and about 11% joblessness respectively.

Kohl's goal is to halve German unemployment by the year 2000, and although he concedes it is an unrealistic target, Bonn says it can solve the problem by introducing structural reforms, such as an overhaul of the tax and pension systems.

Kinkel told the *Maerksche Oderzeitung* newspaper in an interview earlier: "Negotiations [on a jobs chapter] in Brussels are making progress. We are open to a compromise."

But he warned the EU against costly job creation schemes.

The conservative Christian Social Union (CSU) Bavarian sister party of Kohl's Christian

Democrats said in a regional government statement it was also opposed to such schemes, arguing that Germany would bear the brunt of the costs.

"It is unacceptable for the EU to approve a program to fight unemployment, which will be paid for by us, but will benefit others," Bavarian state minister Kurt Faltlhauser said in a CSU government statement on the summit.

The opposition Social Democrats (SPD) renewed their call to the German government to approve a jobs chapter at the summit.

"The Maastricht Treaty must be amended by adding a jobs chapter to oblige European states to make their economic policy with the aim of creating growth and jobs," said Heidi Marie Wicczorek-Zeul, the SPD's spokeswoman on European affairs.



Saudis seek business opportunities in India

Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram (right) shakes hands with Saudi Arabia's Industry Minister Hashem bin Abdullah bin Hashem Yamani during a seminar on investment opportunities in India and Saudi Arabia in New Delhi yesterday. Also seen in the picture is A.S. Kasiwal, president of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, who hosted the seminar. Yamani was leading a 60-member business delegation to India to explore business opportunities. *(Reuters)*

VW suffers in Europe as buyers await new Golf

By JOHN GILARDI

FRANKFURT (Reuters) — Germany's Volkswagen AG is suffering a sales slump in its home market and the rest of Europe as potential buyers appear to be waiting for the new Golf model due out later this year, industry analysts said yesterday.

VW said global sales for the first five months of 1997 rose about nine percent to 1.8 million vehicles, but sales in Germany fell 11% to about 238,000 vehicles compared with the same period in 1996.

Sales also fell 4.4% in western Europe to 395,000 vehicles for the period from January to May.

The global growth is the result of VW's recent foray into Asia and South America and efforts to capitalize on growing demand for mass-produced vehicles in emerging markets.

Some analysts, however, said the growth is coming at the expense of VW's domestic position and the carmaker will now have to pour more money into marketing.

VW is also likely to begin offering bigger incentives to sell off remaining old models of the Golf.

"The figures are quite severe, even for a new model," said Peter Schmidt, an industry analyst at Automotive Industry Data in Tamworth, England. "You will see even more special offers for the Golf in the coming months."

Demand often weakens just before a new model is released because consumers, who can take up to 18 months to decide on a purchase, often hold off buying in order to get the most up-to-date model.

Few public details are known about the new Golf, the vehicle's fourth generation, but trade press reports have said it will offer new body styling, and a more powerful engine. It is due to be unveiled to the public in September at the Frankfurt car show.

"In a nutshell, the new Golf is more product and better value for the same money," Schmidt said.

US defends trade policy with China

By HARRY DUNPHY

WASHINGTON (AP) — Denying China most favored nation trading status would hurt US economic and strategic interests and isolate the communist nation, a Clinton administration official and a senior Democratic lawmaker warned yesterday.

A Republican legislator called the annual trade debate counterproductive and said opponents of MFN should avoid demonizing China.

Defense Secretary William Cohen told a meeting of the Asia Society that if Congress denied normal trading status for China it would discourage Beijing from becoming a responsible member of the international community.

But more importantly, he said, it would damage US strategic

interests in Asia because "our allies would question our ability to carry out a coherent toward China and thus to the region as a whole."

He also warned against driving relations with China into a "spiral of confrontation."

MFN status for China allows normal trade to continue with the same cheap tariffs the US offers to almost every country, except nations like Cuba and North Korea. Congress must renew MFN for China every year.

This causes an annual debate over whether Washington should use higher tariffs to press China in other areas, particularly its human rights record and exports of weapons and nuclear materials to Pakistan, Iran and other nations.

Rep. Lee Hamilton, ranking

Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, said the US should not view China, an emerging superpower, as a threat but as an opportunity.

"The correct policy is to engage China not to isolate it," he said. "Engagement is not endorsement. It is not alliance. It does not mean ignoring our differences with China."

But revoking MFN would amount to economic warfare, he said, and would doom any progress on human rights, nuclear non-proliferation and other issues.

At home, he said the US would lose markets worth \$12 billion in exports, which support 170,000 high-paying jobs.

"It would mean higher prices for Americans," he said, particularly low income consumers who shop for low-cost imports at retail outlets.

Doug Bereuter, the Republican chairman of the Asia and Pacific subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee, said demonizing China was no way to make foreign policy. "The surest way to create an enemy is to treat some-

one like one," he said.

Calling the annual debate on most favored nation trading status for China counterproductive and a relic of the Cold War, Bereuter said it should be eliminated once China joins the World Trade Organization and agrees to its rules.

Chinese Vice Minister for Foreign Trade Long Yongtu said negotiations for China to enter WTO were intensifying and could conclude early next year. He said once China became a member of the Geneva-based body it would abide by its rules and expected the US to accord it permanent MFN status.

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Pound sterling	1.9253	1.9679	0.57	0.57	0.5625
French franc	5.4984	5.5871	0.80	0.80	0.8070
Japanese yen (100)	2.9888	3.0350	2.83	3.08	3.0224
Dutch florin	1.7380	1.7671	1.70	1.80	1.7887
Swiss franc	2.3241	2.3712	2.29	2.41	2.3981
Swedish krona	0.4327	0.4387	0.42	0.43	0.4377
Norwegian krone	0.4720	0.4787	0.46	0.49	0.4777
Denmark krone	0.8138	0.8221	0.80	0.83	0.8212
Finnish mark	0.6507	0.6612	0.65	0.68	0.6598
Canadian dollar	2.4275	2.4687	2.38	2.51	2.4538
Australian dollar	2.5909	2.6023	2.51	2.64	2.5989
S. African rand	0.7471	0.7632	0.67	0.70	0.6954
Belgian franc (10)	0.9482	0.9635	0.93	0.98	0.9574
Austrian schilling (10)	2.7794	2.8248	2.73	2.87	2.8195
Italian lire (1000)	1.3936	1.4088	1.34	1.43	1.3944
Jordanian dinar	4.7457	4.8253	4.69	5.01	4.8464
Egyptian pound	0.9900	1.0400	0.96	1.04	1.0715
EU	3.8115	3.9230	3.73	3.92	3.8662
Irish punt	5.0671	5.1489	4.98	5.23	5.1254
Spanish peseta (100)	2.3116	2.3489	2.27	2.39	2.3451

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WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

Paris stocks and bonds rallied as fears receded about disruption of the timetable for the launch of Europe's single currency. Frankfurt also made gains, but London, after briefly opening at a record level, ended in the minus column.

Most of the action was in currency markets. The dollar recovered slightly after falling to its lowest level since November 1996, but by concerns that a burgeoning Japanese current account surplus would cause trade friction between Washington and Tokyo.

The dollar slumped to 110.70 yen in early trade before clawing its way up to 111.31 in late European trade, still more than a yen below the level seen late on Tuesday.

The trade worries caused the yen to surge across the board and also set a 21-month high for the mark, which was hit by growing optimism about preparations for European monetary union, seen as bad news for the German currency.

The yen's latest advance was powered by overnight news of a big rise in Japan's April current account surplus from a year earlier and comments from US Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers urging Japan to avoid rising trade surpluses.

"The market is focusing on the trade numbers, but this is a development that has been apparent for many months now," said Claudio Demolli, currency analyst at Merrill Lynch.

Currency traders were worried that Washington would take up the issue with Tokyo before a meeting of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations in Denver on June 20-22.

The US seems to be stepping up the war of words, and it looks like we are going to test the 110 (yen) levels," said Steve Hannah, the director of research at IBJ International.

Senior Japanese officials tried to mount a damage limitation exercise. Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuoka said that Japan would act to combat excessive currency swings, while Bank of Japan Governor Yasuo Mutsaers called for more stability.

But their remarks cut little ice with traders because they have failed so far to stop the dollar tumbling over 13 percent from a four-and-a-half year high of 127.46 yen in little more than a month.

The dollar's rebound from its post-war low of 79.76 set in April 1995 has boosted Japanese exporters' competitiveness against their US rivals and fuelled the increase in

Dollar falls to 7-month low, Eurobourses mixed

Japan's trade surpluses.

In equity markets, Paris was the most buoyant of the day, with stocks ending up more than 1% as European Union policy-makers voiced optimism that differences over a budget stability pact for countries inside monetary union could be resolved in time for an EU summit in Amsterdam next week.

"The market really wants to believe France will sign the stability pact in Amsterdam," Credit Agricole Indosuez economist Amaud Mares said. "I think they need to be more cautious."

Stocks and bonds had fallen after the new Socialist government on Monday asked for a delay in signing the pact and said it could not accept the deal agreed by the previous conservative administration unless more services were put on fighting unemployment.

The markets got a lift after Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, said on Tuesday the French government had told him it did not have to wait to present its policies to parliament on June 19 before ratifying the pact.

The new finance minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn said yesterday that France was seeking a fast resolution of the issue but wanted to "obtain the balance we are seeking."

Baroque analyst Dominique Barbet said the EMU picture would be clearer after conservative President Jacques Chirac and Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin met Chancellor Helmut Kohl at a regular Franco-German summit on Friday.

"France is demanding much more than a small footnote on growth. It is trying to change the nature of EMU," said Mares.

In London, an early rally, which briefly touched a new record, ran out of steam to close down 0.3%.

The blue-chip FTSE index had climbed 4% in the previous four sessions.

In Frankfurt, floor trade ended with modest gains but traders said jitters about European monetary union were still a factor and stocks on the computerized IBIS index ended the session barely showing a profit.

Key Representative Rates

US DollarNIS 3.401

StartingNIS 5.5847 + 0.04%

MarkNIS 1.0620 + 0.14%

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

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SPORTS

in brief

Rangers keep Laudrup for another season

LONDON (Reuters) - Danish international Brian Laudrup said yesterday he would complete his existing contract with Scottish champions Glasgow Rangers, quashing talk that he was moving to English title holders Manchester United.

Laudrup, who had also been linked to Ajax Amsterdam, met Rangers chairman David Murray on Tuesday.

"After positive talks I have decided to complete my existing contract with Rangers," he said.

Laudrup has agreed to stay in Scotland until the end of next season, although he said during negotiations with Ajax earlier this month he would leave when his contract expires in a year's time.

Bosnich joins the fun as Australia run riot

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Aston Villa goalkeeper Mark Bosnich relieved his boredom by scoring a late penalty as Australia opened their World Cup qualifying campaign with a 13-0 rout of Solomon Islands yesterday.

Bosnich, who barely touched the ball in goal during the match, stepped up to complete the scoring with the last kick of an embarrassingly one-sided Oceania group game.

Strikers Damian Mori and John Aloisi had, by then, satiated their appetites by scoring five goals each against the hapless south Pacific islanders.

The victory gave Terry Venables his sixth win in as many matches since taking over as Australia national coach late last year.

Kent, Surrey reach B&H Cup final

LONDON (Reuters) - Kent and Surrey will meet in the final of the Benson and Hedges Cup to be played at Lords on July 12 after scoring emphatic wins over respective opponents Northants and Leicestershire on Tuesday.

At Canterbury: Kent beat Northamptonshire by 66 runs. Kent 206-8 in 50 overs (T.Ward 78). Northamptonshire 140 all out in 46 overs (P.Strang 4-29).

At The Oval: Surrey beat Leicestershire by 130 runs. Surrey 308-8 in 50 overs (A.Stewart 87, G.Thorpe 79, A.Hollis 63). Leics. 178 all out in 45.3 overs (P.Nixon 53, M.Bicknell 4-41).

Steelers sign Stewart to new four-year deal

PITTSBURGH (Reuters) - The Pittsburgh Steelers signed versatile Kordell "Slash" Stewart to a new four-year contract on Tuesday.

The team did not disclose terms, but Stewart's agent, Leigh Steinberg, announced it is a four-year deal worth \$9 million with a \$2.6 million signing bonus.

Stewart, a second round pick in 1995, had two years left on his original contract. But the Steelers terminated the contract and signed Stewart, who is hoping to become the team's starting quarterback, to a new four-year deal.

Try of the tour lifts Lions to victory

JOHANNESBURG, June 11 (Reuters) - Two moments of individual brilliance put the British Lions tour of South Africa back on track as they beat the Gauteng Lions 20-14 at Ellis Park yesterday.

Following Saturday's 35-30 defeat to Northern Transvaal, tries from scrum-half Austin Healey and John Bentley within a four-minute span in the second half allowed the tourists to shrug off a lackluster first-half display and recapture the winning habit.

Healey's try in the 66th minute, converted by replacement full-back Neil Jenkins, put the Lions in front for the first time at 10-9 and Bentley then ran 60 meters for one of the finest tries ever scored by a Lion in South Africa.

The Lions trailed 9-3 at half-time due to a poor kicking performance from Mike Catt who succeeded with only one kick from six attempts while Gauteng's Dawie du Toit slotted three penalties from four attempts during the same period.

Wimbledon's Hammam retains control despite Norwegian deal

LONDON (Reuters) - Wimbledon boss Sam Hammam insisted he would remain in charge of the English premier league club despite yesterday's news of a deal to sell a majority stake to two Norwegian millionaires.

The charismatic owner and managing director of the southwest London club, said the arrangement with entrepreneurs Kjell Inge Roekke and Bjorn Rune Gjeltsten was not a buy-out and he would continue to run

Wimbledon on a day-to-day basis.

"I'm not selling out...I will be in complete charge of all the key decisions of the club," Hammam said.

"I am the steering wheel. My foot is on the accelerator and my foot is on the brake," Hammam stressed that the deal, which the NTB news agency in Norway said amounted to an 80 percent stake worth \$42 million, would not result in the Dons spending huge sums on new players or increasing wages.

Surgeon: Graf may not play again

Tennis star out of Wimbledon, US Open following knee operation

VIENNA (AP) - The surgeon who operated on Steffi Graf's left knee said yesterday there is no guarantee she will ever be able to resume competitive tennis.

Graf underwent a two-hour operation Tuesday to repair cartilage and tendon damage and said she expects to be sidelined for four to six months, missing Wimbledon and the US Open. She is the holder of both Grand Slam titles.

Graf was being transferred yesterday from a private clinic in Vienna to a rehabilitation

center at Gars am Kamp in lower Austria.

Graf, 27, issued a statement after the operation saying she was "confident that I will return to the sport which I love so much - and in good health." But her surgeon, Reinhard Weinstabl, was less certain about whether she will be able to resume her career.

"That is certainly our aim," he said.

"Whether that aim can be reached one cannot say now," Weinstabl said the situation was difficult because of Graf's long history of problems with her left knee. She was out for

three months earlier this year after arthroscopic surgery on the knee.

Weinstabl said all post-operative measures "are nothing but an attempt to restore (Graf's health) in an optimal way. Whether this will succeed one cannot yet say - A first step has been made." The surgery came less than a week after Graf's quarterfinal loss in the French Open to Amanda Coetzer.

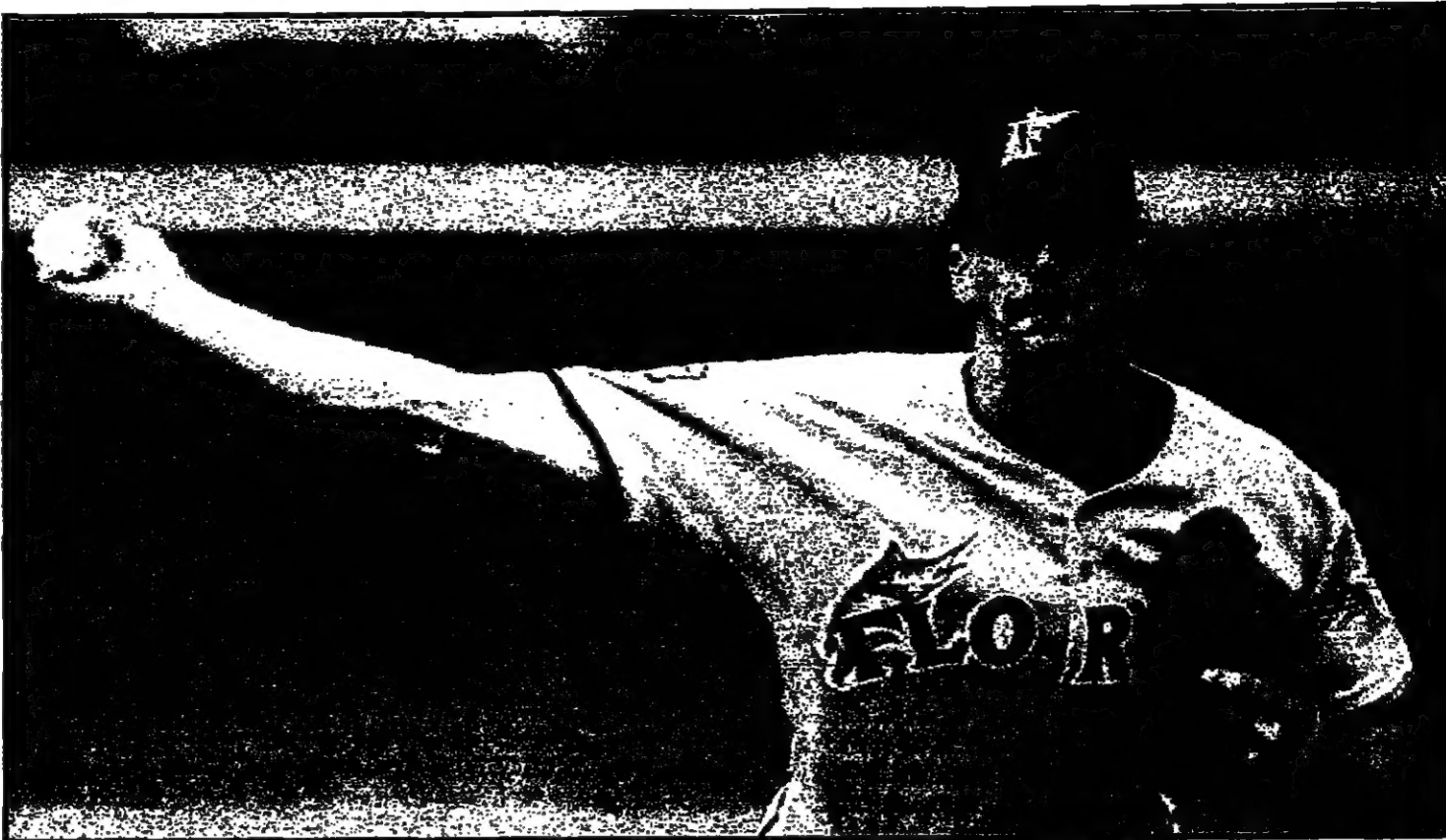
When she returns, Graf will have a long hill to climb to return to the top.

Graf, who has won 21 Grand Slam titles,

dropped to No. 3 in the WTA Tour rankings after her quarterfinal loss in Paris. That's her lowest ranking since 1986.

Missing Wimbledon, the US Open and the season-ending Chase Championships in New York would mean that Graf would probably drop to between 15 and 20 in the rankings.

The last time Graf won a year without winning a Grand Slam title was in 1986 and her lowest world ranking was No. 22 at the end of 1984, just as she was starting her career.



NEARLY-PERFECT MAN - Marlins' pitcher Kevin Brown in action against San Francisco on Tuesday.

Marlins' near perfect Brown settles for no-hitter

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Florida Marlins pitcher Kevin Brown flirted with perfection before settling for a no-hitter against the San Francisco Giants on Tuesday.

Brown became the first player in

the majors to throw a no-hitter this year in a 9-0 rout of San Francisco.

He came within four outs of a perfect game before hitting Marvin Benard with a 1-2 pitch with two out in the eighth inning, then mowed

down the last four batters.

Brown walked none and struck out seven in recording the second no-hitter in Florida franchise history.

In a 99-pitch masterpiece that featured 68 strikes and only five pitches clocked below 90 miles per hour, Brown allowed the Giants only three hits out of the infield.

The game started as a classic pitchers' duel with San Francisco's William Van Landingham (3-4) also

National League				
East Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Atlanta	42	21	.667	-
Florida	36	26	.581	5 1/2
New York	35	27	.565	6
Mt. Rainier	34	28	.548	7 1/2
Philadelphia	21	40	.344	20
Central Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Houston	32	32	.500	-
Pittsburgh	31	31	.500	-
St. Louis	29	33	.469	2
Cincinnati	25	37	.403	6
Chicago	24	39	.381	7 1/2
West Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
San Francisco	35	27	.565	-
Colorado	34	28	.540	1 1/2
Los Angeles	30	32	.484	5
San Diego	28	34	.452	7

American League				
East Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Baltimore	42	17	.712	-
New York	35	27	.565	8 1/2
Toronto	29	30	.492	13
Detroit	28	32	.467	14 1/2
Boston	24	37	.393	19
Central Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Cleveland	31	27	.534	-
Milwaukee	28	31	.475	3 1/2
Kansas City	28	32	.467	4
Chicago	28	33	.459	4 1/2
Minnesota	28	34	.452	5
West Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Anaheim	33	28	.541	-
Seattle	33	29	.532	1/2
Texas	31	29	.517	1 1/2
Oakland	26	38	.408	8 1/2

Monday's NL games: NY Mets 4, Cincinnati 2; Montreal 6, Chicago Cubs 5; Los Angeles 8, Houston 3; St. Louis 9, San Diego 1; San Francisco 7, Florida 4; Colorado 6, Atlanta 3. Tuesday's NL games: Florida 5, San Francisco 6; Montreal 8, Philadelphia 5; Cincinnati 8, Pittsburgh 5; NY Mets 10, Chicago Cubs 6; Atlanta 8, Los Angeles 3; San Diego 6, St. Louis 5, 12 innings. Monday's AL games: Baltimore 7, Boston 2; Kansas City 4, Boston 2; Oakland 6, Detroit 4; Cleveland 5, Milwaukee 4; Texas 6, Seattle 3; Minnesota 10, Texas 1; Anaheim 6, Kansas City 2.

Baseball players, managers look forward to inter-league games

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Baseball purists may never accept it, but players and managers appear to be looking forward to the change of pace when regular-season inter-league games take place for the first time beginning today.

The experiment begins with a quartet of American League West Division teams facing counterparts from the National League West in games that will count - a total departure from history and tradition that has only had teams from the two leagues hooking up in the World Series.

"It's great, the fans will love seeing different players they never see and we get to go to more cities and see new ballpark," said Seattle Mariners superstar Ken Griffey Jr., whose team will host the Colorado Rockies today.

In the other three series that begin inter-league play, the Texas Rangers hosts the San Francisco Giants, the Los Angeles Dodgers travels to Oakland to play the Athletics and the Anaheim Angels play host to the San Diego Padres.

"It's good for business and it perks up interest

in the middle of the season," said Seattle manager Lou Piniella. "I like it."

One of the more intriguing inter-league matchups on the schedule will be a rematch of last year's World Series between the New York Yankees and Atlanta Braves - a series in which the Braves will be looking to exact some revenge.

"There will be an electricity when we play the Yankees because of losing to them in the World Series. We consider them rivals," said Atlanta's Chipper Jones.

Detroit exults over Stanley Cup, Red Wings

DETROIT (Reuters) - More than a million hockey fans gave their beloved Detroit Red Wings a thunderous welcome Tuesday in celebration of the team's first Stanley Cup victory in 42 years.

Thousands of red-and-white clad Detroiters filled downtown streets as Red Wings players, coaches and Lord Stanley's cup itself rolled past in red Ford Mustang convertibles accompanied by marching bands.

"This is great. We haven't had it for 42 years, and now the Cup is back in Detroit," said 10-year-old Matthew Porter, whose wait for the Cup was a lot shorter than many who came out to honor the NHL champions.

The Red Wings swept the Philadelphia Flyers in four games to win the Stanley Cup, capping a wild NHL playoff run with a 2-1 victory Saturday night.

Detroit was swept in the finals two years ago by the New Jersey Devils, one of many disappointments in the team's quest and the championship drought dating back to 1955.

"They had 42 years to plan it. I think they did a great job," legendary Detroit coach Scotty Bowman said of the celebration, attended by an estimated one million people.

"Boy, this beats playing in Philadelphia tonight for game five," he enthused.

Rodman's behavior distracts focus from crucial Game 5

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) - On the eve of the most important basketball game of the season, the NBA Finals were dragged down Tuesday by the latest plot turns in the continuing saga of "As the Worm Turns." The Chicago Bulls and Utah Jazz were tied going into last night's Game 5, but the series has at times resembled a Dennis Rodman soap opera.

Tuesday's happenings had enough angles to push talk about basketball well into the background.

In the latest developments: - The Anti-Defamation League harshly criticized Rodman for his vulgar and derogatory comments about Mormons.

- Rodman more or less repeated his inflammatory statements prior to practice, then said he wouldn't have made similar comments about Jews.

- The NBA and Bulls management said they planned to speak to Rodman about his inflammatory comments, but no suspension or fine appeared to be imminent.

- Rodman returned late at night from his second straight trip to Las Vegas with his rock star friends.

• Michael Jordan said he had given up on trying to chide Rodman into a better performance.

• One Chicago columnist called upon the Bulls to release Rodman immediately.

Rodman was unrepentant in his daily interview session with the media, especially when asked if he planned to apologize for his comments made last weekend about Mormons when he used an explosive to refer to them.

Rodman was suspended by the Bulls earlier this season for cursing on camera during a post-game interview that he broadcast live back to Chicago. He also drew an 11-game ban for kicking a court-side cameraman in the groin during a game at Minnesota.

There is no precedent for a player defaming an entire religious movement, and the league reacted tentatively Tuesday in issuing an official statement.

"If that's what he said, it's indefensible," NBA spokesman Brian McIntyre said. "We will be dealing with Dennis after the finals are concluded." The only official reaction Tuesday from the Mormon Church was a no comment.

Bogus bookie in Epsom Derby swindle

LONDON (Reuters) - A bogus bookmaker has swindled an estimated £40,000 from punters at Saturday's Epsom Derby after setting up with a fake permit and disappearing straight after the race.

Epsom's racecourse management has received 79 complaints about the bookmaker, who called himself John Batten, with registered claims for winning bets alone totalling over £10,500.

But the total stolen is expected to top £40,000 as most of the bets were for the beaten favorite Entrepreneur.

The Sporting Life, a racing specialist newspaper, said yesterday eager punters were queuing up to take Batten's 6-4 against Entrepreneur who finished a poor fourth behind 11-1 Benny The Dip. Most bookmakers were only offering 6-4 ON Entrepreneur.

Stephen Wallis, Epsom's racecourse manager, said Batten bought a bookmaker's badge and "fashed" a bookmaker's permit.

Batten produced plausible betting tickets, although his code name of "Lucan" - the fugitive peer who allegedly bedeviled the family's nanny to death - on the tickets could have aroused suspicions.

Sports Editors: Joseph Hoffman and Ori Lewis

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مكتبة من الرصوف

NEWS

in brief

Chaplain Maj.-Gen. Gad Navon recovering

Doctors at Hadassah-University Hospital treating IDF Chief Chaplain Maj.-Gen. Gad Navon said he was recovering and would be able to return to work in the future. Navon, 75, collapsed during Jerusalem Day ceremonies at Ammunition Hill and was initially listed in serious condition after suffering from an apparent heart attack.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai visited Navon prior to the Shavuot holiday. *Arieh O'Sullivan*

Police arrest four suspects in Lod murder

Police arrested four suspects yesterday in the murder of Ali Abu Jaffer, whose body was found in Lod on Tuesday night as police were investigating reports that gunshots had been heard in the area. Jaffer had been shot several times at close range.

Police suspect the murder resulted from a drug-related dispute. Jaffer, 21, was released from jail three months ago after serving a sentence for drug-related offenses, and the four suspects have similar records. *Itim*

Man seriously hurt in fall from cliff

A 26-year-old man was seriously injured when he fell from a cliff while hiking in the Golan Heights on Tuesday. He was brought by IDF helicopter to Haifa's Rambam Hospital. Police said there has been a recent rise in hiking accidents in the Golan Heights, noting that in the past week six people were rescued by police. *Itim*

Israel, Russia to launch gas talks

Israel and Russia will open negotiations at the beginning of next month in Moscow on the supply of natural gas to Israel, National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon was quoted as saying in Moscow by the Russian news agency Itar-Tass. Sharon said this was agreed in his talks with Russian Prime Minister Victor Chomomyrdin.

He added that experts from the Russian Transport Ministry would soon visit Israel to explore opportunities for Russian companies to place bids for infrastructure projects in Israel, including the construction of railway tracks and renovation of existing lines. *Itim*

Murder suspect Aboutbul released

Police on Tuesday released from custody Assi Aboutbul, 22, of Netanya, who is suspected of involvement in the murder of Shlomo Aboutbul in Paris in May. He was released after a five-day remand, but he will be under house arrest and banned from leaving the country.

At Assi Aboutbul's remand hearing, a Ramle Magistrate's Court judge said there was not enough evidence linking Assi Aboutbul to the crime, but only general suspicions and only approved a five-day remand. Another suspect in the case, Eliran Naim, was released from police custody on Monday. *Itim*

Burg to propose forum on social issues

Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg will present his proposal today for the establishment of a public forum for the advancement of social issues in Israel.

The agency will today hold a special assembly of the representatives of volunteer organizations in the country. The assembly will consider ways to promote volunteerism in Israeli society and encourage citizens to take responsibility for improving the quality of life and solving social problems. *Itim*

Sighting of mouse holds up El Al flight

El Al delayed a flight from Tel Aviv to New York for seven hours to deal with an unwanted traveler.

During a flight Monday from New York to Israel, a passenger told the crew he had seen a mouse. When the plane reached Ben-Gurion Airport, it was grounded as a search for the rodent got under way.

"The search was necessary for security reasons because mice are known for eating away at electrical wires," said El Al spokesman Nachman Klieman.

The flight to New York finally took off Tuesday morning, seven hours late, after no mice were found. *AP*

Construction worker dies from fall

Fadlala Khatib, 60, who had been working at a construction site in Kafr Sumaia yesterday, was fatally injured when he slipped and fell 10 meters. He was taken to Nahariya Government Hospital, where he died shortly after arriving. *Itim*

Boy drowns off Bat Yam beach

Eliran Zada, 13, of Azor, drowned Tuesday afternoon off the Dugma Beach in Bat Yam.

Zada had gone swimming with three friends, and all of them swam out a distance from the shore, where they ran into difficulty because of heavy waves. Several bathers noticed them and managed to pull the three friends to shore, where MDA medics revived them and took them to Wolfson Hospital.

When it emerged that one of the friends was still missing, police launched an immediate search, using a helicopter and boat. Zada's body was found among rocks, near the breakwater. *Itim*

THE PALESTINIANS BETWEEN TERRORISM AND STATEHOOD...



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Parties refute Ben-Ari link

Likud, Labor, Yisrael Ba'aliya angry over allegations

By SARAH HONIG and news agencies



Gregory Lerner (Israel Sun)

Expressions of anger at police innuendo came last night from all three political parties mentioned in connection with the case of Zvi Ben-Ari, formerly known as Gregory Lerner. According to police leaks, MKs from Yisrael Ba'aliya, Labor and Likud, as well as several ministers, might be questioned in the next few days about possible links with the so-called Russian mafia.

The leaks have resulted in considerable tension, since, at least for the record, there is no indication as to which MKs the police are targeting.

In all three parties it was maintained that no one has any idea whom the police suspect, though if ministers are involved, the guess was that they would probably be from Yisrael Ba'aliya.

Police Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz had told Israel Radio on Tuesday that several politicians would be called in as part of the investigation of Ben-Ari.

"We fear that Gregory Lerner gave monetary support to political parties and the question is if they knew who they were getting the money from and what its source was," Hefetz said.

"Everyone who can help clarify the picture will be called in

for questioning and this includes lawmakers and ministers," he said.

Ben-Ari is suspected of defrauding Russian banks of \$85 million and of involvement in murder. Ben-Ari's attorney, Moshe Friedman, argues that the accusations against his client are based on forged documents supplied by his enemies in the Russian police.

It was pointed out in all three parties yesterday that Ben-Ari was obviously not guided by any ideological impulses because he contributed funds to all three parties and had offered to help in campaign broadcasts via the Russian satellite channels picked up in Israel.

Labor's former secretary-general Nissim Zvilli admitted yesterday that Ben-Ari sought to finance election advertising

from these channels for Labor, and that he had approached Zvilli about it. Zvilli took the matter to MKs Moshe Shahal and Haim Ramon, who both thought that would violate laws on campaign financing and campaign broadcasts.

"We politely turned the offer down," Zvilli reported.

According to some reports, Ben-Ari approached Ehud Barak, when he managed Shimon Peres's reelection campaign.

In the Likud, MK Michael Eitan said he knows "of absolutely no Likud MK who dealt with Lerner and if the police know differently, then they should forthwith make public the names of their suspects because by not doing so they are casting aspersions at all Likud MKs."

The party spokeswoman refused comment, saying that she is "not in the habit of reacting to anonymous leaks. We don't think there is any truth in any of this."

Ben-Ari at one point reportedly registered as a Likud member, but the party pointed out that anyone may do so and that there is no investigation into the affairs of each of the 200,000 party members.

Yisrael Ba'aliya admits that prior to the formation of the party, Ben-Ari had "made a donation to the Zionist Forum, but there was nothing illegal

about that and that was not attached to buying our political clout. There was no quid pro quo. We received contributions from other people as well and he contributed to other parties too," said Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein.

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani (Third Way) says that an activist for his party reported that Ben-Ari wanted to meet him, but that he had refused.

Kahalani said on Tuesday that he was approached around six months ago, "by someone in Ashkelon who wished to introduce me to someone who wanted to donate money to the Third Way."

"When the person who wished to meet me was described as having a Mercedes and being surrounded by bodyguards, I immediately gave him a negative answer," Kahalani said. "I didn't inquire further into the identity of the would-be donor. I just said no."

Kahalani said he was concerned that the system of party primaries has created new temptations for politicians.

"Those who want to be elected need a lot of money. Those running on the national lists of the Likud and Labor parties need at least \$100,000, and that money could come from undesirable places," Kahalani said.

Raine Marcus contributed to this report.



Cop 'copters

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani takes a seat in a police helicopter accompanied by police helicopter unit commander, Dep.-Com. Ya'acov Biran, during a visit with the unit in Latrun earlier this week. (Israel Sun)

Acre Festival threatened by politics

By HELEN KAYE

The funding brawl surrounding this year's Acre Festival of Alternative Theater has intensified, following an emergency meeting of the Theater Artists Forum at Tel Aviv Tzavta on Tuesday morning. Arts and Culture Administration head Dr. David Alexander has been given 48 hours to name a producing body for the festival with the authority to disburse funds.

The demand is one of four in a letter to Education, Culture and Arts Minister Zevulun Hammer. Other demands include the appointment of a committee to examine the "neglect and delays which have brought the Acre Festival to its current condition" and securing festival funding from the ministry "at a figure that is not less than last year's."

The meeting and the letter followed an announcement by Hammer that the annual festival would go ahead during Succot as scheduled. His announcement came after a week of mudslinging set in motion by the resignation of Acre Festival artistic director Yitzhak Weingarten.

Weingarten had resigned because the promised public funding had not come through.

According to Alexander, red tape caused by a change in the structure of the Acre Festival public trust was responsible for the funding delays.

"This letter is totally unnecessary," fumed Alexander on Tuesday afternoon, accusing the theater artists of acting in bad faith. "The money is in the bank and the foundation can certainly disburse the funds."

COMMENT

Fix the festival or cancel it

The Acre Festival funding fracas is unseemly. Moreover, there is a great deal of disingenuousness floating around. At this point both sides seem to have political agendas that have very little to do with the festival or its funding.

But the issue is actually the festival itself. It was founded in 1980 as a showcase for alternative theater. It was mounted on a shoestring budget, conditions were primitive, but Acre was definitely different and sometimes even exciting.

That has not been the case for, at the very least, the last five years. For the most part Acre has been a substantial yawn and the theater on offer there, with a few notable exceptions, has not differed from anything on our repertory stages.

Acre is stagnant and theatrically irrelevant. It should either be drastically overhauled, pruned and redefined, or canceled. *Helen Kaye*

Romanian Jews defend country against asset claims

By Jerusalem Post Staff

Romanian Jewish leaders on Tuesday defended Bucharest against accusations that it stalled the return of assets seized from Jews during World War II, and said they would protest the charges made by the World Jewish Restitution Organization.

"The government has already returned five community properties, and others will follow," Nicolae Cajal, head of the Federation of Jewish communities, said at a news conference. "Romania's present government and its president back full restitution of the properties seized from all ethnic groups."

Cajal, whose federation represents Romania's 14,000 remaining Jews, said he would protest to the WIRO, which last week criticized Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic as countries slow to return assets confiscated from Jews by the Nazis and later nationalized by communist regimes.

In Jerusalem, WIRO vice-chairman Naftali Lavie denied reports that the WIRO would try to hinder Polish, Czech and Romanian bids for NATO membership because of the delays in the restitution of Jewish property.

"The Czechs, Poles and Romanians have not complied with their promises," he told Reuters. "We won't intervene in their favor, but that doesn't mean blocking their bids."

However, Lavie was quoted on June 5 in the Polish daily newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* as saying: "We

will use all the means accessible to prevent the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania [from] joining NATO until these countries return all the property to their local Jewish communities."

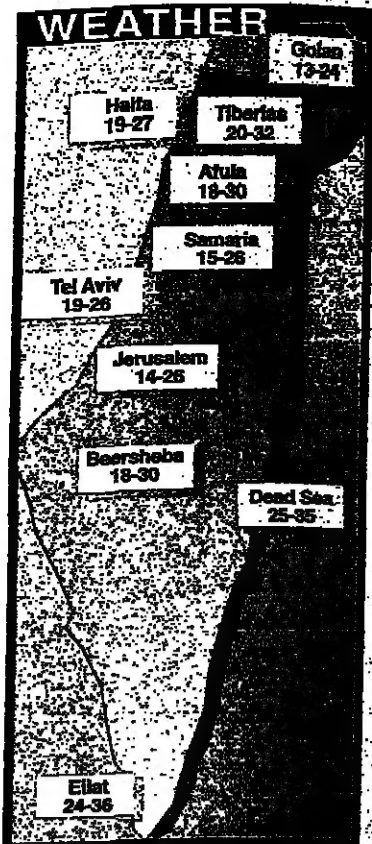
That comment irritated American officials, who have been urging Central and Eastern European nations to repatriate Jewish property, but without conditions. Instead, property restitution is distinct from the US efforts to admit the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania into NATO.

Lavie's comment also widened the distance between the WIRO and the Warsaw and Prague Jewish communities, whose relations already were acrimonious. Warsaw and Prague have accused the WIRO of trying to dominate restitution efforts, in much the same manner that Soviet advisers once dictated terms. The WIRO counters that Warsaw and Prague are too small to legitimately claim to represent the pre-war Jewish populations in their states.

Romania's parliament is today expected to endorse a government order to return five Jewish properties, including a Bucharest theater, a school and a ritual bath. Foreign Minister Adrian Severin is due to visit Israel on Sunday.

Also this week, Romania will set up a foundation called Caritas, run by WIRO and local Jewish leaders, to administer returned Jewish community assets, Cajal said.

Half of Romania's 800,000 Jews died in Nazi death camps. Of the survivors, 320,000 left for Israel during the Communist era.



Forecast: Partly cloudy. Rise in temperatures.

AROUND THE WORLD

	Low	F	High	Notes
Amsterdam	15	59	64	cloudy
Berlin	17	63	68	cloudy
Chicago	15	55	70	clear
Frankfurt	17	63	68	clear
Hamburg	17	63	68	clear
Johannesburg	06	41	77	clear
London	17	63	68	clear
Los Angeles	18	64	76	clear
Montreal	17	63	68	clear
New York	18	64	76	clear
Paris	18	64	76	clear
Rome	18	64	76	clear
Tokyo	18	64	76	clear
Toronto	18	64	76	clear

Winning cards

The winning cards in Tuesday's Mifal Hapayis Chance draw No. 159/97 were the 10 of spades, jack of hearts, king of diamonds and nine of clubs.

'NY Times' Hundreds more Swiss accounts uncovered

By Jerusalem Post Staff

Swiss banks have discovered hundreds more accounts that may have belonged to Holocaust victims and thousands of additional Holocaust-era accounts that they cannot explain, according to yesterday's editions of *The New York Times*.

These disclosures build on the made last week in Jerusalem by Bern to the Volcker Committee panel headed by former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker that is due to begin forensic audits of the war-era accounts next week.

The significantly higher number of accounts had been expected and, in fact, is likely to rise because the Volcker Committee is to review all dormant accounts opened in Swiss banks between 1933 and 1945.

The Swiss Bankers Association announced two years ago that the banks had uncovered 775 Holocaust-era dormant accounts, valued at some \$32 million.

Those accounts apparently were the so-called "foreign accounts," which were made by depositors whose addresses were outside of Switzerland. However, the *Times* said, the banks have found at least 225 more accounts, worth roughly \$8 million.

In addition, there are another 15,000-plus dormant accounts that were opened by Swiss nationals during the war years, the *Times* reported, citing a statement released Tuesday night by the Swiss Bankers Association.

The association told the *Times* that the accounts contained in those accounts are small, but it pledged that "the Volcker Committee will fully examine whether dormant accounts opened by Swiss citizens prior to 1945 were opened for the benefit of Holocaust victims."

At a congressional hearing last December, Volcker outlined a broad role for his committee, without regard to the address of the depositor. The committee's task, he said, is to prepare "an accounting and financial record of accounts Swiss banks originating with those fearing and facing Nazi persecution and which have lain dormant with out identified claimants."

"Such accounts were made opened by, or on behalf of, those Jewish ancestry in Germany and other countries facing German invasion."

The Volcker Committee was established by an agreement reached on May 2, 1995, between the Swiss Bankers Association and the World Jewish Restitution Organization. It is not expected to complete its audit before the end of next year.

However, in what apparently is an expansion of its mission, Volcker Committee was planning an expedited process for matching claimants with dormant accounts and also will take some responsibility for adjudicating claims task was previously left to banks themselves.

Crackdown on foreign work

Sh...

Rioting erupts in Gaza

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